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**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AND STUDENT
BEHAVIOR IN THIRTEEN DELAWARE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

by

Jane N. Case

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Urban
Affairs and Public Policy

Fall 2007

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IN THIRTEEN DELAWARE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by

Jane N. Case

Approved: _____
Maria P. Aristigueta, DPA
Director, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy

Approved: _____
Timothy K. Barnekov, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy

Approved: _____
Carolyn A. Thoroughgood, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed:

Kathryn G. Denhardt, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of dissertation

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed:

Audrey L. Helfman, Ph.D.
Member of dissertation committee

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed:

Steven W. Peuquet, Ph.D.
Member of dissertation committee

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed:

George G. Bear, Ph.D.
Member of dissertation committee

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ABSTRACT

The current study examines indicators in 13 public elementary schools throughout the state of Delaware by using a mixed methods exploratory research design, in an effort to understand the dynamic relationship between school climate and the social, behavioral, and intellectual outcomes of 5th grade students. Research indicators are consistently categorized and discussed in terms of the study's 4 dependent variables: student safety, student risk behavior, general school characteristics, and academic performance; and the study's 2 independent variables: dimensions of school climate and approaches to discipline.

Findings suggest that within the sample population, more favorable school climate schools had low student to teacher ratios, favorable school climates as perceived by students, favorable student perceptions of peer relationships, and more favorable rates of student perceptions of school rule fairness and school safety. Statistically significant, direct correlations were observed between student responses to the statement "I feel safe in my school" and perceptions of rule fairness, students' liking of school, and student relationships. Further, unexpected positive correlations between gambling and student relations as well as between gambling and teacher/staff perceptions of school climate were observed. Positive, statistically significant correlations were observed between teacher education levels and students' perceptions of school climate, students' reports of liking school, students' perceptions of school safety, students' perceptions of student-

teacher-home relations, teachers'/school staffs' perceptions of school climate, and homes' perceptions of school climate.

The need to reveal the intricacies of establishing a constructive school climate and nurturing positive student outcomes remains. Once specifications of this interaction are better understood, policy initiatives can be enacted to better develop healthy environments in all schools. The greatest contributions of the study include a refined approach to understanding relationships between school climate and student outcomes, as well as to highlight the need for better approaches to collecting school climate data.

Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Prelude

In 1993, I was a senior in a Delaware high school. Clothes, friends and driving preoccupied my mind, not crime, violence, or terror. Though I saw fights in the hallways and at football games, I never worried about my safety until one tragic day in school. Laura was a creative and gentle girl with loads of spontaneity to guide her choices. Everyone knew she had attempted to commit suicide before, but we also knew she spent some time in a psychiatric hospital, so we treated it as an event to be left in the past. One evening in early October, many of us traveled across town to our rival school's soccer field to watch the game. As the game progressed, someone alerted the crowd by pointing out that across the field the opposing team's banner was engulfed in flames. The crowd was startled and many spectators from the visiting team were also slightly amused.

Laura started that fire. The next school day progressed without incident until early afternoon. A notice over the school public announcement system directed teachers to lock all classroom doors and not allow any student to leave their classrooms for any reason. This happened once before; a parent came into the school and beat up a teacher; therefore no one seemed terribly rattled initially. However, as time in the locked classrooms passed, fears and speculation began to engulf students and teachers alike.

When at last students were freed to move to their next, and final class period of the day, the halls were jarringly quiet. At the threshold of my final class of the day, I heard what would later be confirmed as truth. There was a gun in the school, and it was Laura who used it. Laura ran from a meeting with her parent and the principal to the other end of the school where our Wellness Center was located, she entered the Wellness Center, proceeded to the bathroom, pulled a gun from her backpack, and fired one shot into her head. Laura was taken off life support the next day. That was 1993; that was my reality.

I am unaware of Laura's suicide making national news, though at that time my world rarely expanded beyond the boundaries of my hometown's city limits. However, school never felt the same; it never felt safe, after that heartbreaking day. As I reflect upon this memory, I realize that it embodies many aspects of still current issues, including school climate and youth risk behavior. Lockdowns, fights between students, and attacks on teachers are not reflective of a positive school climate, yet, they were regular occurrences. At an individual level, a decrease in academic performance, an increase in relationships with deviant peer groups, and Laura's escalating engagement in risk behaviors during the year preceding her death, were serious indicators of her reality. Smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, experimenting with drugs, and setting fires were among Laura's milder indiscretions.

Research Questions

The experience described above planted a seed of interest in school climate. The importance and continued timeliness of this issue, however, is demonstrated in the news and research reports describing continued concerns (and sometime crises) related to school climate and how it impacts students. This research explores school climate and student risk behavior in 13 public elementary schools throughout Delaware. School climate is a complex concept that embodies both tangible and intangible components. An exploration of empirical research will yield as many definitions as there are components of this concept. However, the author's preferred definition, which is most germane to this research, comes from the work of Brian Perkins, President of the Board of Education in New Haven, Connecticut (2006). In "Where We Learn: The CUBE Survey of Urban School Climate" school climate is described as the essence of "the learning environment created through the interaction of human relationships, physical setting, and psychological atmosphere" (Perkins, 2006, p. 1). Past research examining school climate has occurred in distinct, but often complementary, academic areas, including social psychology, health promotion, education, and public policy (Cohen & Pickeral, 2007). The issues offered by the concept of school climate cut across many academic disciplines and impact all geographic areas in the United States today; and the state of Delaware is no exception.

The need to adopt school policy that fosters a healthy school environment is a growing concern among educational practitioners, policymakers, and academics (Cohen & Pickeral, 2007). Research has shown that positive, healthy school climates promote

desirable student outcomes (Marx, et. al., 1998) and tolerance of negative behaviors such as bullying is likely to escalate acts of aggression within the school setting (Moore, 2003). An unsafe school climate weakens the opportunity for optimal learning and development among its student population (Cohen & Pickeral, 2007). Despite a solid knowledge base about the cultivation of a positive school climate, there is a significant disconnect between what is known and what policies and practices actually address. Concerns about the social environment of children are not limited to the school setting and in fact, problems in the school environment might be a result of residual community plights. Nonetheless, curriculum, character education, violence prevention, student codes of conduct, and state and local level regulations regarding expectations within a school's milieu are among the efforts that can be taken to create a healthy school climate.

In a 1997 national assessment of school climate, Delaware schools fared poorly, outscoring only 4 other states and finishing in a three-way tie with two others (Quality Counts, 1997), earning a D- in the rating. In this national assessment, states were graded on school climate using composite measures consisting of size of classes (i.e. the number of students in a class); the level of flexibility allowed at the local level (i.e. school); perceptions of the school among staff, students and their parents; and many other aspects of this dynamic phenomenon (Quality Counts, 1997). Encouragingly, nearly a decade later, Delaware has appreciably improved its standing among other states regarding school climate according to the 2006 Quality Counts report. Delaware was ranked along with one other state, at the top of the state-level school climate comparisons, earning a B

in the rating. Moving from a D- in 1997 to a B in 2006 is a significant accomplishment (Quality Counts, 1997; Quality Counts, 2006).

The research undertaken here will focus on schools. The assumption herein is that all schools can have a positive school climate; and schools with a positive school climate are those that secure a balance between the capacity to ensure school climate policy governance and the ability to sustain program implementation efforts aimed toward positively impacting the school environment. Therefore, a school demarcated as having a “positive school climate” might be juxtaposed to a less positive, or “negative school climate” school and deliver telling information that will inform policy and practice change at the school level. This research seeks to answer the following questions using a mixed methods research design:

- *What differences, if any, exist between Delaware schools with a positive school climate and schools with a negative school climate? How might the observed differences be explained?*
- *Is there a relationship between school climate and student outcomes in Delaware public elementary schools? If so, how might these relationships be explained?*

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This research is not a reflection of work completed using a randomized approach to sampling of Delaware elementary schools. Rather, this work is exploratory in nature and utilizes both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The parameters for

inclusion in the present study were rather stringent, ultimately excluding the vast majority of schools in the state. Therefore, this research is not considered a study producing generalizable findings, but rather a study which will indicate differences, if any, among the sample schools and provide insights into school climate and student outcomes for a portion of Delaware's elementary schoolchildren.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The value of this exploratory research is threefold. First, the use of a mixed methods design provides a depth and breadth of context for school climate, which could not be reached using quantitative research methods in isolation. Next, an opportunity to understand the profundity of relationships between school characteristics and individual student outcomes is offered. The findings will inform future in-depth, multilayered examinations of school policy and procedures as well as other types of research in the field. Finally, the study's findings will benefit education professionals and policymakers through gained insight into specific aspects of this multifaceted phenomenon.

This dissertation begins with an overview of the literature on school climate and student behavior before delving into details about the resources, instrumentation, and methodological design used in the study. Chapter 4 presents findings from the 13 case studies, followed by detailed information on the sample, before moving on to discuss the research study's statistically significant findings. This dissertation closes with conclusions about the research and recommendations for further investigation in this area.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As noted in Chapter 1, school climate for this study's purposes is best defined as "the learning environment created through the interaction of human relationships, physical setting, and psychological atmosphere" (Perkins, 2006, p. 1). Relationships of particular concern to the study are: students' relationships with their peers, student-teacher relationships, and teacher-home relationships. Information regarding sample schools' physical settings will include the county and location-type of the schools, student enrollment, and student-teacher ratios. Finally, the psychological atmosphere will include, but is not limited to, approaches to student discipline, perceptions of school safety, and student conduct.

To increase the collective understanding of school climate and thereby enrich discussion of this topic, Stewart (2003) combined several commonly used definitions. Stewart (2003) stresses three dimensions of school climate: (1) culture, (2) organizational structure, and (3) the social milieu. School culture includes "unwritten beliefs, values, attitudes, and various forms of interaction among students, teachers, and administrators" (Stewart, 2003, p. 580). Culture encompasses what Perkins (2006) refers to as "human relationships" as well as a school's "psychological atmosphere." Stewart's next category is school organizational structure, which relates to the available space, or size of a school

as well as the number of classes offered and the number of students attending the school. This category most closely resembles what Perkins (2006) terms a school's "physical setting" as does Stewart's third and final classification, school social milieu, which concerns the actual school property and where it is located as well as the underlying distinctive traits of individuals, including their "ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and teachers' experience and training" (Stewart, 2003, p. 582).

Researchers Ballantine and Roberts (2007) use the term "value climate" to refer to students' motivations, aspirations and achievements while they define "educational climate" as "a general social condition that characterizes" the nature of schools. Health is Academic: A Guide to Coordinated School Health Programs, promotes the use of the term "healthy school environment," which encompasses "[t]he physical, emotional, and social climate of the school" and is "[d]esigned to provide a safe physical plant, as well as a healthy and supportive environment that fosters learning" (p. 4). Irrespective of one's selected definition, all encompass relationships, physical setting, and general atmosphere in an effort to more clearly discuss school climate in a comprehensive fashion.

Aligned with these common interpretations of school climate, the highly regarded Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Foundation (Lear, et. al., 2006) posits that the school environment is comprised of the physical environment; the policy and administrative environment; the psychosocial environment; and staff health promotion. RWJ elaborates by explaining that the physical environment includes "proper building design, lighting, ventilation, safety, cleanliness, freedom from environmental hazards that foster infection and handicaps, safe transportation policies, and having emergency plans in place; ... " the

policy and administrative environment encompasses “...policies to promote health and reduce stress, and regulations ensuring an environment free from tobacco, drugs, weapons, and violence; ...” the psychosocial environment consists of “...a supportive and nurturing atmosphere, a cooperative academic setting, respect for individual differences, and involvement of families; ...” finally, the health promotion of staff is rather self explanatory in that the intent is to ensure that school “... staff members can become positive role models and increase their commitment to student health” (Lear, et. al., 2006, p. 149). This detailed conceptualization of school climate better enables preparation for the measurement of this multidimensional phenomenon.

The importance of perceptions is also clearly implicated within the context of understanding school climate. Members of the local community acknowledge the importance of a hospitable school environment. Community members report that student, teacher, and school staff kindness increases their enthusiasm and motivation to become an active part of the school community (Epstein, et. al., 2002). Means of creating a warm and inviting school climate are as simple as acknowledging one’s presence or extending one’s appreciation for a job well done. Though increased community involvement is clearly desirable, honest communication between schools and their surrounding communities are equally as advantageous. Concrete steps to increase school/community collaborations might include beautification projects, volunteer work or live performances to display student talents. It is import to note that community partners are not just individuals, but also include organizations of varying sizes – from a small church to a

large corporation (Epstein, et. al., 2002). The fostering of such communal connections is yet another aspect of the social phenomenon of school climate.

Just as community relations are important, so too are relationships between schools and their students' families. Epstein et. al. (2002) report two options regarding the nature of school/parent relationships – oppositional or collegial. If parents are only engaged with schools surrounding differences of opinion or other conflicts, the opportunity to foster a synergistic relationship is lost. Schools need parents and communities; and parents need others from their community as well as their children's schools (Epstein, et. al., 2002 and Walker, et. al., 1996).

Despite real progress in many states, districts, and schools over the past few years, there still are too many schools in which educators do not understand the families of their students, in which families do not understand their children's schools, and in which communities do not understand or assist the schools, families, or students (Epstein, et. al., 2002, p. 25).

The benefits of parent involvement to schools and students are significant. Namely, improvements in academic performance, including standardized achievement tests; enhancements in students social and behavioral skills; as well as decreases in school drop-out rates, are just a few of the incentives associated with parent engagement (Devlin-Scherer & Devlin-Scherer, 1994). Parent engagement is often dependent upon the school's ability to reach out to, and connect with, the parents of their students from one year to the next. Further, age is implicated given that as student-age increases, parental involvement decreases (Devlin-Scherer & Devlin-Scherer, 1994). The conceptualization of parent involvement is important to highlight as well. Often teacher

and parent descriptions of parent engagement are fundamentally different. Teachers and school staff often view parent involvement as the presence or absence of parents in their schools. Parents on the other hand see their involvement as also extending beyond the school building (Devlin-Scherer & Devlin-Scherer, 1994).

As Epstein and colleagues (2002) aptly state,

[g]ood schools have qualified and talented teachers and administrators, high expectations that all students will succeed, rigorous curricula, engaging instruction, responsive and useful tests and assessments, strong guidance for every student, *and* effective school, family, and community partnerships (Balfanz & Mac Iver, 2000; Erb, 2001; McPartland, Balfanz, Jordan, & Legters, 1998; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1996). In good schools, these elements combine to promote students' learning and to create a school climate that is welcoming, safe, caring, stimulating, and joyful for all students, educators, and families (Epstein, et. al, 2002, p. 229).

In short, Epstein, et. al. (2002) stress that the above elements are not disconnected from schools' missions; rather they are fundamental building blocks which must be followed by schools striving for success.

In the National Research Council and Institute of Medicines' *Deadly Lessons: Understanding Lethal School Violence* (Moore, 2003), the relationship among and between adults and students is a recommended measure of a school's social capital. Once relationships between students, their parents, teachers, and other school staff are built, or when needed, reconciled, major advances in this arena of school climate can be made. Further, the authors recommend the extension of school boundaries to avoid the bifurcation of the lives of children and youth as outside versus inside the school building. Partnerships between schools and communities, schools and parents, students and adults,

as well as among students themselves, are ways to foster this boundary expansion and better care for our society's youngest resource (Moore, 2003). This collaborative effort and shared commitment helps to avoid blame and initiates a focus on what matters. As Fleming (1996) so deftly stated,

“... children learn far more from what they live than from what they are told. The mandated curriculum shapes their minds, but it is their cultural experiences in the classroom, working through friendship, self-esteem, motivation, and team spirit – in short, their relationships – that will have the greatest influence on the way they conduct themselves as citizens” (p. 76).

Finally, beyond understanding the term school climate and its various components, including individual perceptions, and the multitude of relationships encompassed in the school culture, it is necessary to examine the concrete aspects of social life that also contribute to the shaping of the school environment. While considering the health and safety of schools, Sprague and Walker (2005) note that poverty level; the number of at-risk students; the frequency and type of arrests; the number of referrals, suspensions and expulsions; and academic achievement levels are all dimensions that determine, to a large extent, how students behave in school and whether they display rule-governed forms of behavior. These authors also recognize such dimensions as sources of school vulnerabilities, which provide an undeviating opportunity for society's ills to interrupt the public education system (Sprague & Walker, 2005).

Indeed, just as there are sources of vulnerabilities, there are known rewards to fostering and maintaining a constructive school climate. A healthy school climate fosters

positive student outcomes by creating a learning environment free from distractions and threats to student social, emotional, and physical wellness. “A safe, clean, and well-maintained school with a positive psychosocial climate and culture can boost student and staff self-esteem and health as well as students’ educational achievement” (Marx, et. al., 1998, p. 96). Given the high-stakes accountability for student performance on standardized tests, this latter mentioned benefit alone offers schools a major motivational incentive to pay close attention to school climate and its interaction with student outcomes. Though Marx, et. al., (1998) notes that school environments are influenced by factors external to the school, thereby making change-initiatives more challenging, these researchers posit that interventions aimed at broad social or situational circumstances may prove more effective than interventions focused upon established traits of an individual, thus indicating the importance of further exploration into school climate initiatives.

Based upon their national study of school-based delinquency prevention efforts, Gottfredson, et. al. (2005) identified three essential strategies used in safe schools – lessons of civility, media literacy instruction, and clear school rules and regulations. These strategies highlight the need to focus on broad, aggregate level components of schooling rather than exclusively upon targeted approaches aimed at specific students. The school-wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) approach is one example of such a model used to promote positive student outcomes and is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Guided by the definitions discussed earlier, the present research will examine the correlations, if any, between school climate and the following areas – (1) student safety, (2) student risk behavior, (3) school characteristics, and (4) student academic performance. These four categories, discussed in detail below, guide the framework for the study’s data collection process, analysis plan, and discussion.

Student Safety and School Climate

There are a variety of factors that may impact a school’s response to behavioral and safety related incidents, such factors include the school size; the organizational structuring; teacher characteristics; the extent of parent engagement; school, district, state and federal policies; school security approaches; and the various naturally occurring relationships (e.g. among students, or between students and their teachers or other adults in the school). All of these factors influence incident-responses, and thus impact school climate indicators such as perceived safety and perceived fairness of school disciplinary actions (Sprague and Walker, 2005).

The most logical approach to ensuring student safety is preparedness. A detailed school safety plan can guide the groundwork needed to afford all students a safe environment in which to learn. Traditional preparation has centered on individuals; however, safety plans must address the bigger picture. School safety plans must detail the measures to be taken to secure the identified requisites. Specifically, this includes the procurement of resources (e.g. funding, and staff time), commitment to best practices, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure continuous effectiveness and improvements when

necessary (Sprague and Walker, 2005). When thoroughly and thoughtfully addressed, assurance of student safety can benefit the school environment in many critical ways.

Student Risk Behavior and School Climate

If adults and students are aware of early warning signs, this knowledge can be used to enable preventative action. Sprague and Walker (2005) listed indicators identified by the *Early Warning/Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools* panel, which included risk behaviors such as: “social withdrawal,” victimization, “expression of violence in writings and drawings,” unrestrained anger or impulsivity, and the use of drugs including alcohol (p. 129). “Parents, teachers, school counselors, and sometimes peers are the most likely informants of these warning signs, because they are in the best position to observe a child’s characteristic behavior over time and to note atypical patterns or occurrences” (Sprague and Walker, 2005, p. 129). Sprague and Walker (2005) caution however, that these are warning signs, and should not be used for anything but a general guide. Further, “...children typically exhibit multiple rather than isolated warning signs” (Sprague and Walker, 2005).

School Characteristics and School Climate

Though many are beyond the control of school leaders, some school characteristics can be adjusted and further contribute to a positive school climate. For example, the setting of a school – urban, suburban, or rural – cannot be changed, however, the student-to-teacher ratios can be controlled (though resources along with a

host of other issues are implicated). Student enrollment is likely beyond the control of local school administrators; however, efforts to promote parent and community involvement are within their scope of influence. By-and-large, within the current study, aspects categorized within the “school characteristics” group are neutral in terms of the impact on school climate. For example, the county, school setting, and student-to-teacher ratios are basically benign, while suspension rates are generally malevolent.

In general, the category “school characteristics” is vast, and includes the physical setting of a school as well as specific student, teacher/staff, and home related indicators. Disciplinary styles also fall within this broad categorization. School disciplinary policies vary on a broad continuum from those which are best classified as “zero-tolerance” and punitive based, to those recognized as positive and prevention-oriented. Irrespective of the point of reference on this continuum, the hoped for byproducts of school disciplinary policies generally includes improved student academic performance, the promotion of acceptable social and behavioral outcomes, and a safe environment in which students are able to learn.

Punitive Discipline

Many common actions undertaken to ensure school order are unnecessarily harsh and only help to alleviate public anxiety, rather than decrease the number of violent or undesirable events in schools. Some examples of these less effective efforts include high-tech gadgetry such as security cameras and metal detectors, on-site security patrol, building renovations, school dress codes and uniforms, as well as increased disciplinary

vigilance and zero-tolerance policies. Six punitive approaches emerged as ineffective according to interviewed experts. These ineffective approaches are (1) scare tactics, (2) adding prevention programming to an already besieged school (3) the isolation of misbehaving students, (4) creating overly simplistic approaches that go unsupported by the school climate, (5) a program focused solely on the enhancement of student self-esteem, and (6) a program which merely provides information without including opportunities for practice or actionable next steps (Dunsenbury, et. al, 1997).

Dunsenbury, et. al. (1997) state that, "...student awareness of school rules and mild punishment to enforce such rules were more effective in reducing school violence than security measures."

The use of punitive approaches to discipline without providing guidance for pro-social behavior may result in adverse and ultimately unhelpful outcomes (Irvin, et. al., 2004). Mayer (1995) found that stand-alone punitive practices generally displaced problem behaviors (e.g. into the community or home environment) resulting in increased rates of antisocial behavior (e.g. vandalism, aggressive behavior, and truancy) among youth. Mayer (1995) advocates for positive school disciplinary approaches that lead to favorable child-level and school-wide outcomes.

Positive Discipline

"Research indicates that policies that are positive are more effective than those that are more punitive" (Dunsenbury, et. al, 1997: p. 412). Citing multiple researchers, Dunsenbury, et. al. (1997) noted the importance of decreasing the amount of routine

disturbances (e.g. bullying behaviors) in schools because of the negative impact these events have on the school environment and because such routine disturbances are often antecedents to more violent behaviors. In this research, a particular model of positive discipline will be highlighted: Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). All of the sample schools have had some form of training in, and are in various stages of implementing, the PBS system. Climate data were only collected in Delaware “PBS schools” in 2006 because of the value this particular model places upon establishing and maintaining a positive school climate.

Positive Behavior Supports Model

A popular behavior management model that integrates aspects of school climate, student conduct, and academic performance to improve the overall climate of a school is the Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) model. PBS works to establish a climate of safety and respect in a range of environments for children and youth, including schools, communities and the home. Though one component of PBS is to prevent problem behaviors, it is also used to support positive social outcomes. The academic benefits observed after this model’s implementation in schools has resulted in an increased interest in PBS. This approach is especially valuable in public school settings where children tend to vary widely on the developmental continuum (www.pbis.org). “PBS has been defined as a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviors in all students” (Sugai, et. al., 2000 as cited in Sugai and Horner, 2002: p. 130).

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a technique used in the study and modification of behavior through environmental modifications. The use of ABA in the therapeutic treatment of autistic children and persons with other developmental disorders has gained in popularity. Though its use is intended to influence behaviors of social import, ABA can also be used to modify any behavior regardless of its social relevance. Research in this field is often focused upon individuals rather than large populations. Major components of ABA are: (1) antecedents (verbal or physical stimuli), (2) behavioral responses to these antecedents, and (3) consequences or outcomes occurring as a response to the behaviors (<http://www.shapingbehavior.com/whatisaba.html>). An expansion of ABA to address severe problem behaviors and developmental disabilities resulted in the birth of PBS. Over time, the observed benefits of PBS resulted in enhancements to the model, and an expansion of the intended target audience. In addition to serving special needs children and youth, PBS evolved to address the general student population's behavioral management needs. Specifically, methods to implement PBS at the individual level and the environmental or systemic level were developed, thus establishing the relevance of PBS to school climate research (www.pbis.org).

The PBS model is of particular importance to this study not only because of each sample schools' involvement with its implementation, but because its focus is not on students alone. As Sprague and Walker (2005) point out, a focus on student behavior is only one aspect of securing positive school climates. The physical space within and outside of the school building; the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of school leadership;

and the influence of the greater community must also be considered (Sprague and Walker, 2005).

Student Academic Performance and School Climate

The measurement of social phenomenon is a challenge to new and seasoned social scientific researchers alike. Measurement of academic performance is no exception. The difficulty of establishing reliable and valid measures of student academic achievement must not be minimized. The complexities are particularly astounding given the varied expectations society has placed upon school systems. When considering measurement, it is difficult to decide where the boundaries of “academic performance” lay. Richard Rothstein (2000) expands upon this concern during a quest to develop a “Composite Index of School Performance” (Rothstein, 2000, p. 409).

After noting countless school responsibilities, which extend beyond the mere imparting of academic content, Rothstein (2000) acknowledges that the use of achievement scores on standardized tests is a common method to measure student academic performance. However, it is important to note that this does not encompass all aspects of societal expectations. Some of what Rothstein (2000) distinguishes as composites of a measure of academic performance were discussed above and/or are captured in the variables of school climate and risk behavior within this study. Examples of this overlap include: cooperation and common moral principles, insurances of equity, parental attachment to their children’s school, the physical conditions of a school

building, class size, and the extension of safety and security to all students and adults in the school.

The expectations for public schools are ever growing, and there is now a clear indication that schools must "... establish and maintain a safe and orderly school climate that promotes academic achievement" (Bear, In Press). Nonetheless, in today's society, schools are held accountable over all else, to academic performance of students. Though testing scores offer a narrow picture of student academic performance, the lack of availability of other types of scholastic information often eliminates any opportunity to enhance this measure.

Measures of School Climate

The need to measure school climate and its various dimensions is clear, but the best approach to doing so is less obvious. Ballantine and Roberts' (2007) concept of measuring educational climate includes an examination of: a school's architecture, teachers' expectations of students, the use of discipline and encouragement, the socioeconomic background of the student body, the race or ethnicity of the student population, the presence or absence of equitable treatment of all students consistently across teachers and school staff, as well as a host of additional indicators (Ballantine and Roberts, 2007). Stewart (2003) provides measureable examples of characteristics captured by the concept of school climate including building and grounds safety, exposure to or participation in risk behaviors, and the nature of the interactions between school staff and students and school staff and parents (Stewart, 2003). According to Brint

(1998) schools that enhance individual student potential: have adequate resources, are of a reasonable size, stress academic excellence, are structured to mirror expectations, employ high quality teachers, are well cared for, and promote attachments with students, their parents, and interested stakeholders in school-sponsored educational and social activities. All of these characteristics could serve as measures of schools climate, providing the data are available.

Since 1997, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in collaboration with the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), has published the annual report *Indicators of School Crime and Safety (ISCS)*. The ISCS identifies, discusses, and reports upon 21 indicators, which fall into 7 broad categories. These categories are: (1) Violent Deaths, (2) Nonfatal Student Victimization, (3) Nonfatal Teacher Victimization, (4) School Environment, (5) Fights, Weapons, and Illegal Substances, (6) Fear and Avoidance, and (7) Discipline, Safety, and Security Measures (DeVoe, et. al., 2005). It is categories 4, 5, 6 and 7 that are most germane to the current study, and are comprised of indicators all schools should track in an effort to better foster positive school climates. The specific indicators from the latter categories are highlighted in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 – National Center for Education Statistics - Crime and Safety Indicators

School Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violent and Other Incidents at Public Schools and Those Reported to the Police • Discipline Problems Reported by Public Schools • Students' Reports of Gangs at School • Students' Reports of Drug Availability on School Property • Students' Reports of Being Called Hate-Related Words and Seeing Hate-Related Graffiti • Bullying at School
Fights, Weapons, and Illegal Substances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Fights on School Property and Anywhere • Students Carrying Weapons on School Property and Anywhere • Students' Use of Alcohol on School Property and Anywhere • Students' Use of Marijuana on School Property and Anywhere
Fear and Avoidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' Perceptions of Personal Safety at School and Away From School • Students' Reports of Avoiding School Activities or Specific Places in School
Discipline, Safety, and Security Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious Disciplinary Actions Taken by Public Schools • Safety and Security Measures Taken by Public Schools • Students' Reports of Safety and Security Measures Observed at School

Adapted from DeVoe, et. al., 2005

Though Table 2.1 is not an exhaustive list of indicators for schools to monitor in terms of stability and change in trajectories, many of these indicators are likely to already be recorded. A system to monitor such information in a meaningful way to promote positive school climate is necessary, however it must be implemented without inundating schools with additional data collection responsibilities. Sprague and Walker (2005) present the concept of school climate within the framework of risk and protective factors (see Table 2.2). Though looking at schools in terms of safe versus unsafe, these factors easily translate into characteristics of healthy and unhealthy or favorable and unfavorable school climates as well.

Table 2.2 - School-Level Risk and Protective Factors

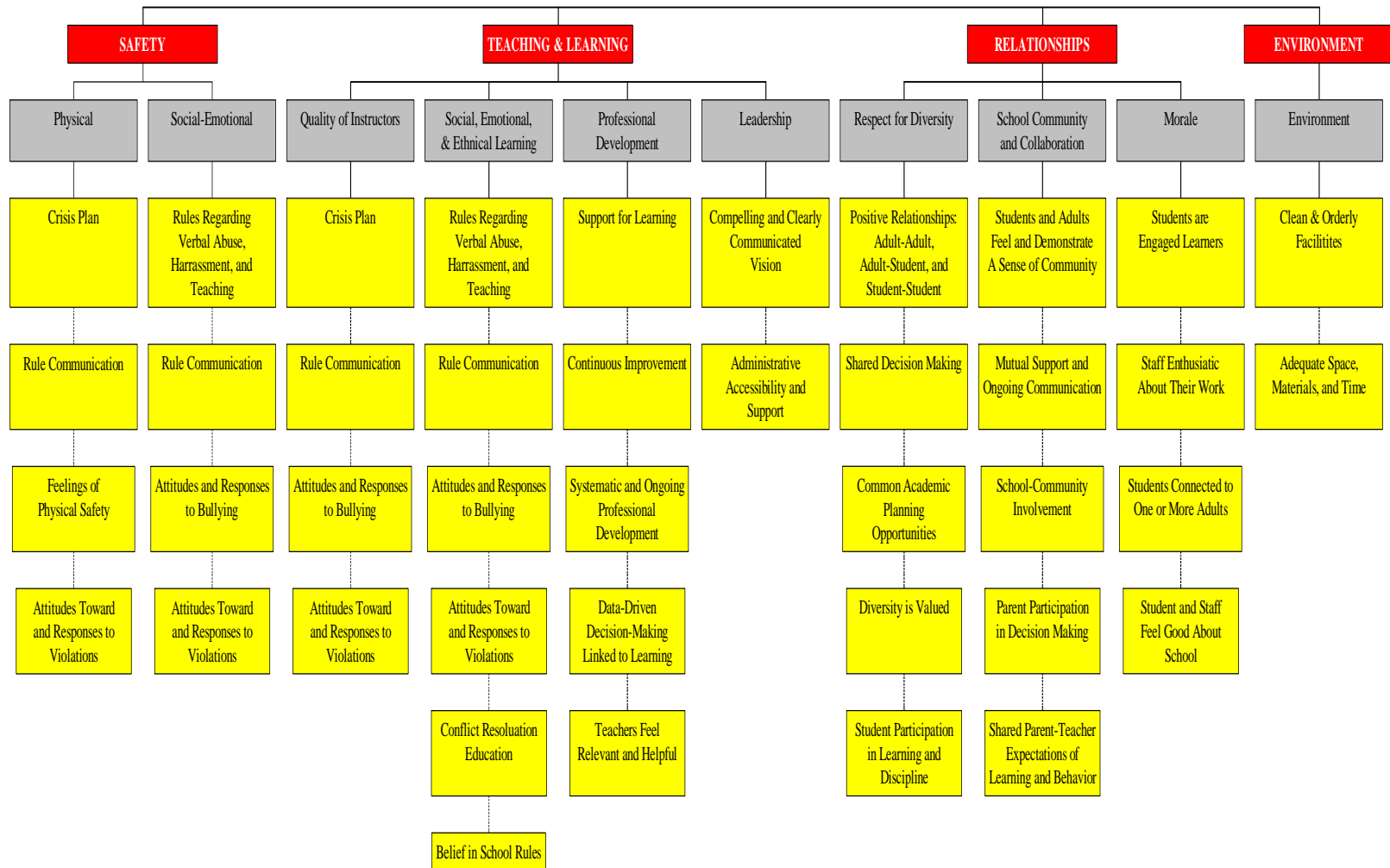
School-Based Risk Factors	School-Based Protective Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor design and use of school space • Overcrowding • Lack of caring but firm disciplinary procedures • Insensitivity to, and poor accommodation of, multicultural factors • Student alienation • Rejection of at-risk students by teachers and peers • Anger and resentment at school routines and demands for conformity • Poor supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive school climate and atmosphere • Clear and high performance expectations for <i>all</i> students • Inclusionary values and practices throughout the school • Strong students bonding to the school environment • High levels of student participation and parent involvement in schooling • Provision of opportunities for skill acquisition and social development • School-wide conflict-resolution strategies

Adapted from Sprague and Walker's (2005) figure on bipolar dimensions and attributes of unsafe and safe schools, with associated risk and protective factors (p. 3).

Arum (2003) listed youth socialization and school climate indicators used in the *1982 High School and Beyond* and the *1992 National Education Longitudinal Study*. The overlap between these studies and those to be used in the current study is great. These surveys used the safety of schools, educational commitment of students and teachers, student grades, high school graduation rates, test scores, students' willingness to disobey rules, disruptive student behavior, student fighting, and student arrests as means to learn more about youth behavior and the school environment. School-level indicators were also examined such as: urban/rural school setting; drop-out rates; rates of poor students; rates of African American and Hispanic students; student to teacher ratios; African American teachers; Hispanic teachers; school size; and the average students' socioeconomic status (Arum, 2003).

The Center for Social and Emotional Education's National School Climate Center (NSCC) has identified 4 domains of school climate with corresponding sub groupings and a list of specific indicators for each of the sub groupings. The 4 domains are safety, teaching and learning, relationships, and environment; and include indicators that could prove useful to efforts toward school climate measurement. Please refer to the next page for a visual depiction of this information adapted from the NSCC (<http://www.csee.net>).

Dimensions of School Climate and Major Indicators



Adapted from the Center for Social and Emotional Education's National School Climate Center (<http://www.csee.net>).

To this point, concrete aspects of school climate have primarily been discussed, however, there are also perceptions of school climate to consider which are often much more difficult to cement. Humans' perceptions are commonly examined in social scientific research. Uncovering attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors to learn more about the social world and human experiences is sometimes referred to as phenomenological research. Distinguished as a qualitative research method, "[t]he phenomenological method aims to describe, understand and interpret the meanings of experiences of human life. It focuses on research questions such as what it is like to experience a particular situation" (Bloor and Wood, 2006, p. 128).

The focus upon perceptions to explore the concept of school climate has been used in various ways. For example, Johnson, Johnson, and Zimmerman (1996) studied student perceptions of school climate using scales that assessed perceived "actual status" versus "desired status" of factors such as trust, respect, and caring in school (p. 64). The school climate survey conducted by Quality Counts (1997) explored teacher perceptions of school safety as an element of school climate. Finally, Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, and Gottfredson (2005) used teacher and student perceptions of school climate in their national research study. These authors examined elements of school climate in an effort to predict chaos within schools. It is clear that there is no shortage of potential measures to use in an effort to gain insights into the phenomenon of school's climate.

Chapter Summary

The meaning of school climate varies by researcher; though there are commonalities in the numerous definitions that are typically used. Generally, school climate is understood as multipart, where interpersonal relationships and the physical and psychological atmospheres interrelate to contribute to this complex phenomenon. The indicators under examination in the present study were selected based upon these common attributes.

It is clear that schools assist in the development of children and youth and influence their transitions into adulthood. “Because everyone attends school for a significant period, the school experience shapes an individual’s outlook, expectations, relationships, and behavior not only while a student but for a lifetime (Henderson, 1993). The quality of the school experience depends to a large extent on the quality of the school’s physical and psychosocial environment” (Henderson, 1993 as cited in Marx, et. al., 1998, p. 111). Given the centrality of school to the life of children and youth and the interactions between the school environment and individual outcomes, the importance of this research undertaking is highlighted. Further, as McCabe and Cohen (2006) report, school climate research supports the theory that a “... safe, caring, connected, participatory and responsive school climate is associated with and/or predicts positive youth development, effective risk prevention efforts and academic achievement” (p. 1).

Though academic achievement is the nation’s top priority when judging the quality of schools, parental concerns related to safety and other student outcomes are also important. Unlike academics, however, “systematic approaches to assessing schools on

the basis of behavioral success or failure are not well developed at present” (Sprague and Walker, 2005, p. 37). This exploratory research relies upon theory to guide the investigation of school climate in Delaware public elementary schools, but is not a deductive quest to verify hypotheses. However, it is anticipated that promising policy initiatives will emerge from the research findings and help to develop a framework for systematically evaluating schools’ climates in addition to academic outcomes. In order to answer the research questions, the indicators to be explored were selected based upon the literature previously discussed, and are listed in Table 2.3 below. The research study’s indicators are organized into one of five categories – student safety, student risk behavior, school characteristics, academics, and perceptions of school climate.

It is important to note that these categories are exclusive distinctions for the current study; however, within a broader context, a number of these variables could be accurately classified into more than one category. For example, distinctions among study indicators between “student safety” and “student risk” behaviors are primarily based upon data sources; however, the use of substances could be accurately classified in either group. Furthermore, “school characteristics” is a broad classification and includes indicators such as student body populations and student to teacher ratios, however, these characteristics could also be considered aspects of school climate when considered outside of the context of the current study.

Table 2.3 - Research Study Indicators

Student Safety
School Crimes per 100 Students
DDOE Offenses per 100 Students
Bullying Incidents per 100 Students
Offensive Touching Incidents per 100 Students
Disorderly Conduct Incidents per 100 Students
Students Reporting that they Stay Away from Parts of the School to Avoid Trouble
Students Reporting that they Feel Safe in Their School
Students Reporting that Fighting is Problem in Their School
Student Risk Behavior
Students Reporting that they have Never Stolen at School
Students Reporting that they have Never Gambled
Students Reporting that they have Never Drunk Alcohol
Students Reporting that they have Never Smoked Cigarettes
Students Reporting that they have Never Smoked Marijuana
Students Reporting that they have Never Used Inhalants
Students Reporting that they have Never Used Other Substances
Students Reporting that they Like Trying New/Exciting Things Even if Against the Law
School Characteristics
County and Setting (e.g. urban or rural)
School Performance Rating in 2006
Student -Teacher Ratios in 2006
School Choice Students Enrolled during the 2006 School Year
Limited English Proficiency Students Enrolled during the 2006 School Year
Low Income Students Enrolled during the 2006 School Year
Special Education Students Enrolled during the 2006 School Year
Teaching Staff Experience (Percentage with 10 years or more versus Less than 10 years)
Teacher Education Levels (Percentage with versus without at Least a Masters Degree)
Total Student Enrollment
Suspensions per 100 Students
Teacher and Student Ethnic Composition
Parent and Community Involvement
Student Dress Code
School Mission Statement and Goals

Table 2.3 – Continued

Student Academic Performance
Average Rate of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Testing Standards [Includes Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies Content Areas]
School Climate
Students' Perceptions of the Use of Positive and Punitive Discipline Techniques
Teachers'/School Staffs', Homes', and Students' Overall Perceptions of School Climate
Students' Perceptions of Student Relations and Student/Teacher/Home Relations
Students' Perceptions of Fairness of School Rules
Students' Perceptions of Liking School and of School Safety

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

As outlined previously, this study seeks to answer two major research questions – (1) what differences, if any, exist between Delaware schools with a positive school climate and schools with a negative school climate? How might the observed differences be explained? (2) Is there a correlation between school climate and student outcomes in Delaware public elementary schools? If so, how might these correlations be explained? To answer these questions, a secondary analysis of data collected by two different survey tools will be used in combination with the content analyses of school profile data from the 2006 academic year and sample school Internet websites. The school environment is a fundamental context to investigate and ultimately inform our understanding of the association between perceptions of school climate and student outcomes. This exploratory, aggregate level appraisal of schools through the use of data gathered from annual school profiles, sample school websites, and survey data, is a meaningful activity positioned to inform school policy at the state, district, and local levels.

Research Sample: School Selection Criteria

There are three counties in the state of Delaware; the northernmost and most densely populated county is New Castle County (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-78171/Delaware>). New Castle County has 5 school districts, which include 50 elementary schools, 15 middle schools, and 14 high schools; there are a total of 79 schools

throughout this county (<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/maps/DistrictMaps/StateMap.pdf>) serving approximately 66,806 children (http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe_pubenrolldst2005.pdf). Kent County is south of New Castle County and is home to the state's capital city, Dover. Kent County has 5 school districts with 24 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, and 6 high schools for a total of 38 schools serving approximately 25,512 children. Finally, Sussex County, the southernmost of the three counties in Delaware and the most rural (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-78171/Delaware>), is home to 6 school districts, including 17 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, and 8 high schools for a total of 33 schools serving approximately 21,897 children (<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/maps/DistrictMaps/StateMap.pdf>).

Criteria for inclusion in this study's sample are threefold. First, this study is limited to schools that participated in the 2006 Delaware School Climate Survey ($n = 52$) conducted by the University of Delaware's Center for Disabilities Studies under contract by the Delaware Department of Education. Second, the sample was further limited to traditional (i.e. non-alternative or charter) schools with a 5th grade class ($n = 20$). This selection criterion was necessary due to the small number of other types/configurations of schools with available climate data and available student-reported behavior data. Third, only schools granting permission to use their data in the current research were included ($n = 20$). Unfortunately, upon receipt of the school climate survey data, 6 of the possible 20 schools to be included in the sample had incomplete subscale responses, forcing their elimination from the research sample. Finally, one potential sample school's DATOD

survey data were not obtained resulting in a final sample population of 13. Meeting these criteria, the final sample consisted of a total of 13 public elementary schools. (Please see Appendix A for a map of Delaware, with the 3 counties and 13 sample schools indicated).

As discussed in Chapter 2, school climate is a complex phenomenon. The need for an operational definition of school climate as well as student outcomes is critical to the present study. For measurement purposes, “school climate,” in this study, refers to the aggregate level perceptions of a school as reported by students, their parents or guardians, as well as teachers and school staff. This concept also includes student perceptions of school safety, relationships, and discipline practices as measured by the 2006 Delaware School Climate Survey, as well as data collected and reported by each school on an annual basis as required through federal, state, and/or local policy.

Finally, the concept of “student outcomes” is two-part in the current study, consisting of student self-reported risk behaviors, and student academic performance. Risk behavior in the current study is operationalized through the use of the school-level aggregate of students’ social choices using self-reports of engagement in a variety of activities including: substance use, gambling, and stealing. Student academic performance is represented at the school-level by the aggregate percentage of students who met or exceeded state standards on subject-specific standardized tests in 2006.

Secondary Data Analysis: Instrumentation

As alluded to in the preceding sampling discussion, multiple sources of information were utilized in the current study. Student self-report behavior data were available via the 2006 Delaware Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Abuse Survey; school climate data were available through the 2006 Delaware School Climate Survey; and information regarding school demographics and other pertinent school characteristics were gathered through the 2006 annual school profile reports. Additional information was gleaned from Internet sources, including school websites and www.greatschools.net. All of these sources are described in detail below.

Delaware Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Abuse Survey

Conducted annually by the University of Delaware Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies, the Delaware Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Abuse Survey (DATOD) gathers data from public school students in grades 5, 8, and 11. The DATOD assesses students' attitudes on various risk related topics. Data are traditionally collected between the months of January and June via an anonymous survey administration process.

The surveys are distributed in classrooms and are designed to take no more than one class period for students to complete. Employees of the University of Delaware proctor to avoid student anxieties associated with school personnel's involvement in the collection of such sensitive information. Students and parents may choose not to participate in this research, though few exercised their right to do so. In total, 7,827 5th graders responded to the 2006 DATOD survey. This number of respondents reflects the

final count after students reporting the use of a fabricated substance (i.e. Dactyls - rubes, dacks) or other clearly fallacious responses were removed from the dataset. Schools and school districts typically use data from the survey in grant applications and to monitor the effectiveness of school-level prevention programming.

Using empirically supported information, specific DATOD survey questions to be used in the current study were systematically selected. (Please see Appendix B for a list of selected study indicators). Only indicators highly relevant to the current exploratory study were pulled for analytical purposes.

Delaware School Climate Survey

There are three versions of the Delaware School Climate Survey, which were developed by George Bear, Ph.D. for the Delaware Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) project. The PBS project is a collaborative partnership between the University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies, University of Delaware School of Education, and the Delaware Department of Education. Dr. Bear developed one version of the school climate survey for students, another for teachers and staff, and a third home version for parents and guardians. Each of the three versions requests completion using a basic scantron form and each is designed to be completed anonymously with a minimal amount of demographic information requested from respondents. Completion of any version of the school climate survey was completely voluntary.

Only the student version of the school climate survey was used in its entirety in this study and consists of the following subscales, which were derived from factor

analysis: Positive Teacher/Student/Home Relations, Positive Student Relations, Fairness for Rules, Liking of School, and School Safety. These 5 subscales in combination make up the overall school climate score, while an additional 2 scales, Use of Positive Discipline Techniques, and Punitive Consequences/Misbehavior, were examined individually. The overall perceptions of school climate according to Teachers/Staff, and the Home were also explored.

The Delaware School Climate Surveys were developed to supply schools with concise but constructive information. Teacher version of the school climate survey has no more than 50 items. Results from the surveys are intended to inform program improvement and assessment and offer targeted areas of focus for schools. Though the three climate survey versions can be used in isolation, the intent is to use them simultaneously with other measures such as school population information, suspension rates, and office discipline referrals.

Student Version

The student version of the Delaware School Climate Survey (**DSCS – Student Survey**) begins with three basic demographic questions covering grade level, gender, and race; and consists of two parts. Part I includes 29 items total, with 5 subscales and Part II is an 8-item section that makes up 2 scales – use of positive and use of punitive discipline techniques. In Part I of the school climate survey student version, respondents use a 4-point scale, where *1 = Disagree a Lot*, *2 = Disagree*, *3 = Agree*, and *4 = Agree a Lot*. When appropriate, negative items were reverse-scored for ease of data interpretation and

analysis. The five subscales in Part I of the student version of the school climate survey are listed below along with the items that comprise the subscale scoring. (Please refer to Appendix C for a copy of the Delaware School Climate Survey: Student Version).

1. *Positive Teacher-Student Relations* (With a reliability coefficient of .86)

- Teachers treat students with respect.
- Teachers care about their students.
- I like my teachers.
- Adults who work in this school care about the students.
- Teachers listen to you when you have a problem.
- Teachers let you know when you are doing a good job.
- Adults in this school treat students fairly.

2. *Positive Student Relations* (With a reliability coefficient of .79)

- Students get along with one another.
- Students are friendly toward most other students.
- Students really care about each other.
- Students treat each other with respect.

3. *Fairness for Rules* (With a reliability coefficient of .70)

- School rules are fair.
- Teachers are fair when correcting misbehavior.
- The rules in this school are too harsh.
- The school's Code of Conduct is fair.

4. *Liking of School* (With a reliability coefficient of .80)

- I wish I went to another school
- I like this school.
- I am proud of my school.
- This school feels like a prison.

5. *School Safety* (With a reliability coefficient of .80)

- This school is safe.
- Students feel safe in this school.
- I feel safe in this school.

Finally, the total student perceptions of school climate score can range from a low of 22 to a high of 88, and the reliability coefficient for the total student perceptions of school climate score is .93 (Bear, 2006).

In Part II, respondents again are asked to use a 4-point scale, however, the response categories offered were *1 = Never*, *2 = 1-2 times*, *3 = 3-5 times*, and *4 = 6 or more times*. Again, when necessary the negative survey items were reverse-scored for ease of data analysis and interpretation. It is important to emphasize here that a high score on use of punitive techniques scale reflects less use of this type of discipline. The two scales in Part II of the student version of the school climate survey are listed below along with the items that comprise the scales' scoring.

1. *Positive Techniques*

- The class was rewarded for good behavior.
- The teacher praised or rewarded a student for good behavior.
- I was praised or rewarded for good behavior.

2. *Punitive Consequences/Misbehavior*

- Someone got into trouble for disobeying rules.
- Someone was sent out of class because of misbehavior.
- Someone was suspended out of school.
- Someone received in-school suspension.

Teacher/Staff Version

The Teacher/Staff version of the Delaware School Climate Survey (**DSCS – Teacher/Staff Survey**) begins with two demographic-type questions; the first question asks the respondent to report his or her current position in the school and the second, asks the type of school where the teacher or staff member is employed (i.e. elementary, middle, or high school). This version (i.e. teacher/staff) of the school climate survey is

divided into three parts. (Please see Appendix D for a copy of the Delaware School Climate Survey: Teacher and Staff Version).

In Part I of the school climate survey teacher/staff version, respondents were asked to use a 4-point scale, where *1 = Disagree a Lot*, *2 = Disagree*, *3 = Agree*, and *4 = Agree a Lot* in response to a total of 29 survey items that comprise 5 subscales. Negative items were reverse-scored for data analysis and interpretation. The five subscales in Part I of the teacher/staff version of the school climate survey are listed below along with the items that comprise each subscale (Bear, 2006).

1. *Positive Teacher Relations with Students and Home* (With a reliability coefficient of .86)
 - Teachers listen to the concerns of parents.
 - Teachers care about their students.
 - Teachers do a good job communicating with parents.
 - Teachers listen to students when they have a problem.
 - Teachers show respect toward parents.
 - Teachers treat students with respect.
 - Parents are informed not only about their child's misbehavior, but also about good behavior.
 - Teachers work closely with families to help students with behavior problems.
 - Adults who work in this school care about students.
2. *Positive Student Relations* (With a reliability coefficient of .84)
 - Students treat each other with respect.
 - Students really care about each other.
 - Students get along with one another.
 - Students are friendly toward most other students.
3. *Fairness of Rules* (With a reliability coefficient of .74)
 - The school rules are fair.
 - Consequences of breaking school rules are fair.
 - The school's Code of Conduct is fair.

4. *School Problems* (With a reliability coefficient of .78)
 - Stealing is a problem in this school.
 - Drugs are a problem in this school.
 - Fights are a problem in this school.
 - Students threaten and bully others in this school.
 - Cheating on tests and assignments is a problem in this school.
5. *Liking of School* (With a reliability coefficient of .78)
 - I wish I taught in another school.
 - I like this school.

The total teacher/staff perceptions of school climate score can range from a low score of 23 to a high score of 92 and the reliability coefficient for the total teacher/staff school climate score is .90. The teacher/staff survey has two additional parts, which were not used in the current study but warrant a brief summary nonetheless. Part II includes 6 items; there are no subscales in Part II. Part II measures “the extent to which teachers used positive reinforcement and punitive techniques during the previous week” (Bear, 2006, p. 6). Part III is made up 10 items “measuring teacher/staff satisfaction with key aspects of the school’s climate and positive behavioral supports” (Bear, 2006, p. 6).

Home Version

The home version of the Delaware School Climate Survey (**DSCS – Home Survey**) begins with three basic demographic questions. The first question asks respondents what grade level their child is in, the next requests the gender of the respondents’ child; and the third question requests the respondents’ child’s race. This brief series of questions is followed by 3 distinct parts of the survey. This version of the questionnaire was sent home to parents/guardians by teachers via their students and

returned using the same method. Students were sent home with a letter requesting parent/guardian participation in the survey along with a copy of the survey. The letter was personalized for each school, and included a brief explanation of the purpose of the survey, and a notice that all information is confidential and no identifying information was requested from respondents. The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and the University of Delaware, Center for Disabilities Studies were indicated as the parties collecting these data. Given the use of an electronic scantron form, the parents/guardians were asked to complete the survey using a pencil or a blue or black ink pen.

If parents were unsure about how to answer a particular question, they were advised in the letter to make an “educated guess” regarding their response. However, they were also encouraged to call their student’s principal or classroom teacher if there were any questions that arose. Upon completion, parents were asked to return the survey in a school-supplied and sealed envelope via their students. Though school autonomy was built into this distribution process, approximately a two-week timeframe was allocated for the entire process – from distribution, to completion and survey return. See Appendix F for an example letter of the suggested language for schools to use provided by DDOE.

In Part I of the DSCS – Home Survey parents/guardians of sample school students were asked to use a 4-point scale, where *1 = Disagree a Lot*, *2 = Disagree*, *3 = Agree*, and *4 = Agree a Lot* in response to a total of 24 survey items which are comprised of 5 subscales. Negative items were reverse-scored for ease of data analysis and interpretation when appropriate. The five subscales in Part I of the home version of the school climate survey are listed below along with the items that comprise the subscale (Bear, 2006).

1. *Positive Teacher Relations with Students and Home* (With a reliability coefficient of .91)
 - Teachers do a good job communicating with parents.
 - Teachers are fair when correcting misbehavior.
 - Adults who work in this school care about the students.
 - Parents are informed not only about their child's misbehavior, but also about good behavior.
 - Teachers care about their students.
 - Teachers work closely with parents to help students when they have problems.
 - Teachers listen to the concerns of parents.
 - Teachers show respect toward parents.
 - Teachers treat students with respect.
 - Teachers listen to students when they have a problem.
2. *Positive Student Relations* (With a reliability coefficient of .89)
 - Students are friendly toward most other students.
 - Students treat each other with respect.
 - Students get along with one another.
 - Students really care about each other.
3. *Fairness of Rules* (With a reliability coefficient of .76)
 - The school rules are fair.
 - Consequences of breaking school rules are fair.
 - The rules in this school are too harsh.
 - The school's Code of Conduct is fair.
4. *School Problems* (With a reliability coefficient of .74)
 - Stealing is a problem in this school.
 - Students threaten and bully others in this school.
 - Drugs are a problem in this school.
 - Fights are a problem in this school.
5. *Overall Liking of School* (With a reliability coefficient of .79)
 - I like this school.
 - I wish my child went to another school.

The total home perceptions of school climate score can range from a low score of 24 to a high score of 96 and the reliability coefficient for the total school climate score teacher/staff version is .92. As mentioned above, the home survey, like the teacher/staff survey, has two additional parts, which were not used in the current study but also warrant a brief summary. Part II includes 6 items; there are no subscales in Part II. Part II measures “the extent to which positive and punitive techniques were used with the respondent’s child during the past school year” (Bear, 2006, p. 9). Part III is made up of 9 items “measuring parent satisfaction with key aspects of the school’s climate and positive behavioral supports” (Bear, 2006, p. 9).

Annual Delaware Schools Profile Reports

The third source of information is school profile data, which are easily obtained through the Delaware Department of Education’s Internet site (www.profiles.doe.k12.de.us). School profiles are compiled by each school at the end of the academic year and are posted on the Internet. School profiles consist of information such as the name of the school principal, the school address and other contact information, the school’s mission and goals, the school performance rating, staffing information and ratios, enrollment, student and staff race/ethnicity, staff gender, school choice rates, teaching staff experience, and student testing, among a host of additional information. (<http://www.profiles.doe.k12.de.us>).

Information relevant to the current study was gleaned from these profiles and included the following: the county where school is located, school performance rating,

achievement based promotion rates, student/teacher ratios, choice student enrollment, percent of limited English proficiency students, percent of low income students, percent of special education students, staff teaching experience (i.e. less than 3 years, 3 – 9 years, 10 – 19 years, 20 – 29 years or 30 or more years), total student enrollment, number of suspensions issued during the 2006 school year (converted into suspensions per 100 students), students meeting or exceeding state testing standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies (combined to yield one testing score for analysis purposes), teachers' ethnicities, students' ethnicities, teachers' education levels, number of school crimes (converted to per 100 students for comparative purposes), number of DDOE offenses (converted to per 100 students for comparative purposes), number of incidents of bullying (converted to per 100 students for comparative purposes), number of incidents of offensive touching (converted to per 100 students for comparative purposes), and the number of disorderly conduct incidents (converted to per 100 students for comparative purposes).

Supplemental Information: Internet Resources

As previously mentioned, much of the school-level information was obtained via sample schools' profile reports with the exception of the study's school location variable. Information regarding the locale of each sample school was gathered from The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website (www.nces.ed.gov) which classifies schools based upon population estimates and U.S. Census Bureau definitions. Any

additional information about each participating school used in the current study was obtained from one of the resources described below.

Sample School Websites

Each of the 13 sample schools has an Internet website, though the amount and types of information vary, as does the sophistication of the websites themselves. Relevant information derived from these websites was entered in the content analysis template (located in Appendix D), and specific findings pertaining to each school are located throughout Chapter 4.

www.greatschools.net

The Internet site www.greatschools.net (GreatSchools) is an online resource and forum geared toward parents of school-aged children (kindergarten through 12th grades). Through this site, parents are able to review information about any school in the country and add comments of their own. This is a particularly useful tool when parents are determining which schools their children will attend or conducting research on various topics related to the education of children and youth in the United States today. Categories of school-level information addressed on www.greatschools.net include: safety and discipline; parent involvement; extracurricular activities; teacher quality; principal leadership; and overall quality of the school.

GreatSchools scores schools on a 10-point scale, offers parents a 5-point rating system to complete, and allows parents to comment regarding their level of satisfaction

with a particular school. The site also provides principals with the opportunity to respond to parent comments at their discretion. A systematic review of this data source adds to the qualitative analysis of sample schools thereby creating a robust composite picture of each. Beyond its unique offerings, further support for the use of information contained on this site is the 11th Annual Webby Awards distinction of the “Best Family and Parenting Site” according to the 2007 People’s Voice Awards. This award is recognized as the “Oscars of the Internet” and indicates the standard of quality and popularity of award-winning sites such as GreatSchools (<http://www.webbyawards.com/press/articles.php>).

Data Permission for Use Processes

Working with a representative from the University of Delaware Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies (UD-CDAS), a formal request was made via email for access to the 2006 school year DATOD data from 5th grade respondents. Approximately one month after this request, the data were sent directly via email attachment. The process to request use of the *Delaware School Climate Survey* data was extensive. Working with a representative from the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), a data request and permission form was developed by the researcher; reviewed, commented on, and approved by the DDOE representative; then distributed by the representative to each of the appropriate contact persons from the 52 schools where school climate data were collected in 2006. (Please refer to Appendix E for a copy of the data request letter and permission form used.)

Permissions were faxed directly to the DDOE representative who then provided the researcher with a list of schools agreeing to the request. Approximately two weeks after the DDOE deadline for a response to the data permission request the researcher followed up via email with specific school contacts. In most cases the contact person was a representative from an individual school. However, in at least two cases the contact persons were district level employees who granted (or denied) permission for the use of data from schools in their respective districts. Once approvals were granted, the final school climate dataset was transferred electronically from the survey instrument developer, Dr. George Bear, directly to the researcher.

Data Analysis Plan

In order to answer the research questions, perceptions of school climate were treated as independent variables and student outcomes as dependent variables. A mixed methods approach to the analysis of these data is the most promising of the available options, particularly given the study's small sample size. The need to use nonparametric statistical tests and content analyses also influenced this study's data analysis plan. However, the plan is largely driven by the assumption that differences will be observed between sample schools of varying climates.

In order to analyze these data, high/low comparisons of schools will be used. Distinctions between sample schools will be based upon the median score for sample schools on each of the study indicators. For example, if SCHOOL A has an average school climate score of 4, SCHOOL B has an average school climate score of 1,

SCHOOL C has an average school climate score of 3, SCHOOL D has an average school climate score of 2.5, and SCHOOL E has an average school climate score of 2, the sum of school climate scores in SCHOOLS A, B, C, D, and E is 12.5. Among these 5 hypothetical schools the mean is equal to 2.5 and the median is also equal to 2.5, however, this is not always true. In the current study, schools with school climate scores equal to or below the median of 2.5 were classified as “low” or less favorable schools. Schools where school climate was greater than the median were designated as “high” or more favorable schools, in terms of perceptions of school climate. Therefore, in the example above, SCHOOLS A, and C would be classified in the current study as high school climate schools, and SCHOOLS B, D and E would be treated as low school climate schools (Please refer to Figure 3.1 below for a depiction of this example).

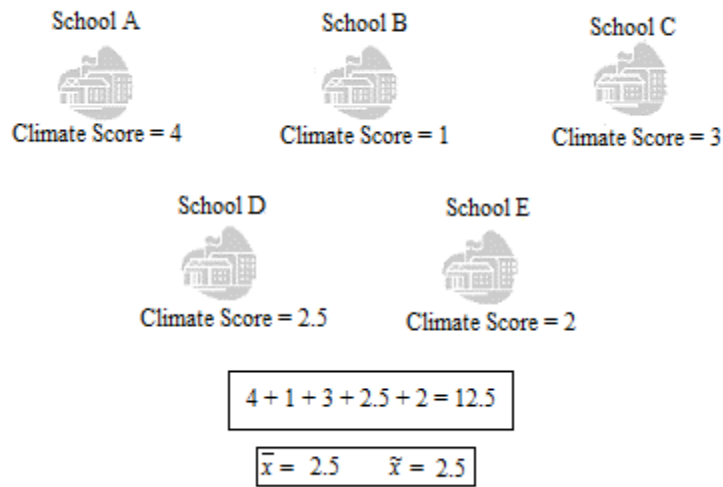


Figure 3.1 – Sample School Bifurcations

The source of information to be used in this study to gain information regarding student academic achievement is the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the state standards within a given school on all 5 content areas as reported in the 2006 annual school profile reports. The five content areas are: reading, mathematics, writing, science, and social studies. Averages are reported on a standard scale of 0% - 100%. Therefore, a score of 76.1% in social studies indicates that 76.1% of the students who took the social studies test at “Excellence Elementary School” met or exceeded state testing standards in this subject area. To simplify the study’s academic indicator, rates of success on each of the subject area tests were averaged to obtain one score for each of the sample schools. Figure 3.2 below offers a depiction of the method utilized to obtain school academic indicator scores.

Rate of “Excellence Elementary” students meeting or exceeding state testing standards in:	
Reading:	75%
Mathematics:	80%
Writing:	88%
Science:	60%
Social Studies:	72%
$75 + 80 + 88 + 60 + 72 = \mathbf{375}$ $375 \div 5 = \mathbf{75}$	
Therefore, the rate of “Excellence Elementary” students meeting or exceeding state testing standards overall is 75%; this score was calculated for each sample school and used as the overall school-level academic indicator within this study.	

Figure 3.2 – Method for Calculation of Sample Schools’ Academic Indicators

A reliability analysis of 5th grade reading, mathematics, and writing, along with 4th grade science, and social studies (N = 73) resulted in an alpha of .8927 (with a standardized item alpha of .9069) indicating a strong correlation among these 5 items. Please see Table 3.1 below for further detail on the reliability analysis and correlation matrix of this particular indicator.

Table 3.1 Correlation Matrix and Reliability Analysis – Academic Content Areas

	Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Science	Social Studies
Reading	1.0000				
Mathematics	.8324	1.0000			
Writing	.7013	.7392	1.0000		
Science	.5949	.4691	.3646	1.0000	
Social Studies	.7912	.6796	.5683	.8676	1.0000

N of Cases = 73

Reliability Coefficients

5 items

Alpha = .8927

Standardized item alpha = .9069

As mentioned previously, there is a vast amount of information collected using the DATOD survey instrument. Therefore, information selected for use in the study's analysis was prioritized based upon the literature review and the study's research agenda. Indicators related to known risk behaviors (e.g. gambling) along with the use of any illegal substance (including alcohol and cigarettes given that they are both illegal for children and adolescents to purchase or use) were given priority over other variables such as how often a seatbelt is worn while riding in a vehicle, or helmets are worn while riding

a bicycle. The final questions selected for use in the present study from the 2006 5th grade version of the DATOD survey are listed below and are also located in Appendix F.

- I feel safe in my school.
- I stay away from certain parts of the school to avoid trouble.
- Fighting is a problem in this school.
- Have you ever taken (not borrowed) something that didn't belong to you at school?
- How often have you gambled (bet) for money or possessions?
- Have you ever smoked most of a cigarette (more than a few puffs)?
- Have you ever had a drink of alcohol (wine, beer, liquor) more than just a sip?
- Have you ever smoked marijuana (pot, weed)?
- How often do you use inhalants (huffing, glue, sprays, gasoline)?
- I like to try new or exciting things, even if they are against the law.

Given that alcohol and tobacco are known as “gateway drugs” (Kandel, 2002), these two variables will be examined independently. Additionally, marijuana and inhalants were examined independently because marijuana is typically the first illegal substance used (Kandel, 2002) and inhalants are typically easily obtainable for young children. These four variables (alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and inhalants) were examined separately from the substance use composite measure described below. An additional substance use variable within the study is a composite measure that includes the following questions:

- How often have you used cigars?
- How often have you used Bidis/Kreteks or clove cigarettes?
- How often have you used chewing tobacco, snuff, dip (Skoal, Red Man)?
- How often have you used hallucinogens (acid, LSD, trip, shrooms)?
- How often have you used downers, prescription and street drugs (tranqs, barbs, Xanax) to get high?
- How often have you use uppers, prescription and street drugs (speed, meth, crank, diet pills) to get high?
- How often have you used powdered cocaine (snow, blow)?

A reliability analysis of the latter seven substance use composite items ($n = 2,108$) resulted in an alpha of .7419 (with a standardized alpha of .7485) indicating a strong correlation among these seven survey items. (Please see the substance use reliability analysis and correlation matrix, Table 3.2 below for further detail). Hallucinogens, uppers, downers, etcetera, were collapsed into a single indicator for the current study's purposes. Therefore, a total of 5 substance-use related questions were examined – alcohol abstention, cigarette abstention, marijuana abstention, abstention from inhalants, and the composite measure abstention from “other substances.”

Table 3.2 Correlation Matrix and Reliability Analysis – Substance Use

	Cigar	Clove Cigarette	Chewing Tobacco	Downers	Uppers	Hallucinogens	Powdered Cocaine
Cigar	1.0000						
Clove Cigarette	.5775	1.0000					
Chewing Tobacco	.2475	.1970	1.0000				
Downers	.2349	.2855	.2141	1.0000			
Uppers	.5153	.4268	.1678	.3761	1.0000		
Hallucinogens	.2014	.1831	.2332	.3201	.2567	1.0000	
Powdered Cocaine	.2834	.2360	.2854	.3674	.3664	.2889	1.0000

N of Cases = 2108

Reliability Coefficients

7 items

Alpha = .7419

Standardized item alpha = .7485

To obtain school-level scores on all 11 (10 individual items and 1 composite measure) DATOD items, averages were calculated. For example, respondents were asked to answer “yes” or “no” regarding the statement “I feel safe in my school.” For every

positive response a “100” was recorded and for every negative response, a “0” was recorded. Once all responses on this item were recoded, averages for each of the 13 sample schools were calculated. The average was used as an aggregate, school-level, score. Please see Table 3.3 below for a depiction of this process.

Table 3.3 - Depiction of School-Level Score Calculations for Yes/No Responses

Original Question: I feel safe in my school.		
Respondent	Response:	Recoded as:
1	No	0
2	Yes	100
3	Yes	100
4	No	0
5	Yes	100
6	Yes	100
7	Yes	100
8	No	0
9	Yes	100
10	Yes	100
		$700 \div 10 = 70$
The school’s score on this variable is 70; indicating that 70% of student respondents feel safe in their school.		

Of the DATOD questions examined, 10 were structured with yes/no responses while the remaining 9 questions offered a choice of 6 possible responses. In the case of the 7 substance use questions used as a composite measure, the question regarding student use of inhalants, and the question regarding student engagement in gambling activities, response category options were “never,” “before but not in past year,” “a few times in past year,” “once or twice a month,” “once or twice a week,” or “almost

everyday.” In the above circumstances, respondents answering “never” were assigned a score of “100.” Any response other than “never” was recorded as a “0.” Please see Table 3.4 below for a depiction of this process. After the calculations were completed, schools were assigned a designation of “high” or “low” based upon the sample’s median score on each indicator (i.e. when a sample school’s score was equal to or below the median, they were assigned as a “low” school and any school above the median was treated as a “high” school in the present study). Again, please refer to Appendix F for further detail on DATOD questions used in the study.

Table 3.4 - School-Level Score Calculations with Multiple Response Categories

Original Question: How often have you used hallucinogens (acid, LSD, trip, schrooms)?		
Respondent	Response:	Recoded as:
1	Not in Past Year	0
2	Never	100
3	Almost Everyday	0
4	Never	100
5	Never	100
6	Never	100
7	Never	100
8	Once/Twice Month	0
9	Never	100
10	Not in Past Year	0
		$600 \div 10 = 60$
In this example, the school’s score on this variable is 60; indicating that 60% of responding students abstained from the use of hallucinogens.		

Limitations of the Methodology

Secondary data are a common source of information used in social scientific studies. However, there are limitations associated with its use. Some of these restrictions include: non-representative datasets, variations in meaning or definition of phenomena being studied, use of varying data gathering methods, a lack of the second researcher's human connection to the sample, the varied intent between the original data collection and the new study's purposes, and that problems or biases are transferred to the second study (Miller & Salkind, 2002). As mentioned previously, the sample schools considered for inclusion in this study were limited because of survey data availability, case selection criteria, and the organizational approval for the use of school climate data.

Such limitations are inherent drawbacks to the use of secondary data; however, this does not minimize the importance of the undertaking or the information it yields. In the case of all survey data to be used in this study, the information collected never requested identifying information, thereby relinquishing any concerns of individual respondent confidentiality issues at the outset. Precautions were taken in the analysis and write-up of the current study to avoid identification of schools agreeing to the use of their school climate data. Pseudonyms were assigned to each school and location information was limited to county and type of setting (e.g. urban, suburban, and rural). In the majority of instances, specific pieces of information collected from annual profiles or the Internet were rounded or generalized to further avoid possible sample school identification.

Chapter Summary

This study seeks to answer two major research questions – (1) *What differences, if any, exist between Delaware schools with a positive school climate and schools with a negative school climate? How might the observed differences be explained?* and (2) *Is there a relationship between school climate and student outcomes in Delaware public elementary schools? If so, how might these relationships be explained?*

To answer the study's research questions, a secondary analysis of data collected by two different survey tools will be used in conjunction with important data from school profiles as well as a targeted Internet exploration of each sample school. Research of this nature has not been undertaken to date in Delaware public schools, and in general. Contributions to the body of literature on school climate as well as opportunities to inform policy at the state and local levels are implicated via this research design. The researcher argues that the school environment is a vital context to be explored in order to increase our collective understanding of the relationship between school climate and student outcomes; and thereby accurately inform policy decision makers.

Aligned with findings from current literature, the researcher hypothesizes that a correlation between school climate and student outcomes will be observed. This descriptive, aggregate level assessment of schools offers a unique opportunity to explore a generally abstract concept in greater detail. The use of data gathered from annual school profiles and survey data collected from students in Delaware public elementary schools as well as their parents and teachers, is a meaningful undertaking with potential to inform future experimental endeavors focused upon the same topic.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The rationale for selection of a mixed methods design largely relies upon the data available for exploration to answer the research questions. The study's small sample size ($n = 13$) does not lend itself to complex, parametric statistical analyses. However, a qualitative exploration of each school as a separate model of school milieu coupled with an in-group comparison of sample schools strengthens the study's analysis plan despite the lack of a large, random sample of Delaware public elementary schools.

As explained in Chapter 3, all of the study's indicators (with the exception of county and locale) were dichotomized using the median score of the 13 sample schools. For example, if SCHOOL A has 400 students enrolled, SCHOOL B has 700 students enrolled, SCHOOL C has 600 students enrolled, SCHOOL D has 1,500 students enrolled, and SCHOOL E has 100 students enrolled, the sum of students enrolled in SCHOOLS A, B, C, D, and E is 3,300. Among these 5 hypothetical schools, the mean is equal to 660 and the median is 600. Therefore, in this study, schools with student enrollment equal to or below the median of 600 would be classified as "low enrollment" schools. Schools where student enrollment was greater than the median would be designated as "high enrollment" schools. Therefore, in the example above, SCHOOLS A, C, and E would be classified as low enrollment schools, and SCHOOLS B and D would be treated as high enrollment schools. (Please refer to Figure 4.1 for a depiction of the example shared above.) It is important to remember in this example, as well as throughout current study's

analysis, that these high/low designations are relative to the sample under examination only, not the greater population of Delaware public elementary schools.

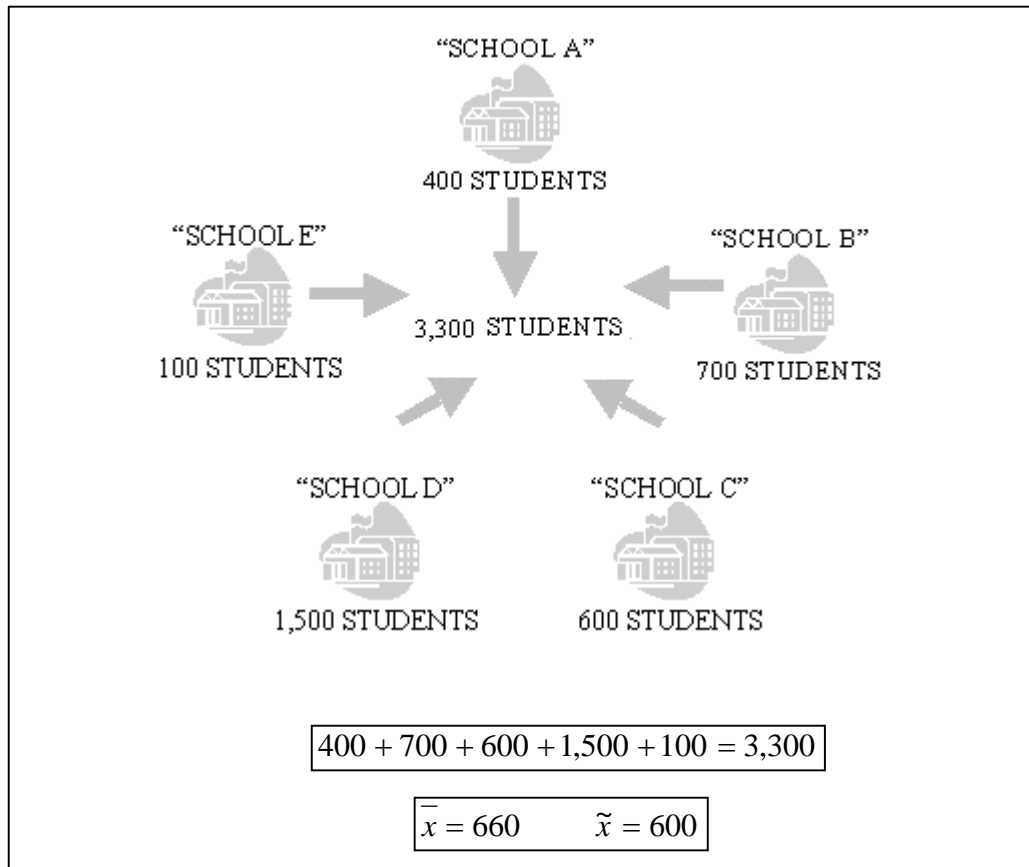


Figure 4.1 – An Illustration of the Research Study’s Dichotomization Process

The dichotomization of the variables examined in this study resulted in the need to use Fisher's exact test statistic to determine significant correlations, while Pearson's Chi-Square test statistic is also reported as further support for the study's statistically

significant findings. To explain the study's findings, this chapter is laid out first by sharing the qualitative information gathered, followed by a presentation of the statistically significant cross tabulations uncovered, and ending with an overall assessment of sample schools as indicated by the research findings. A profile was developed for each of the 13 sample schools based upon the content analyses templates used when gathering data from study resources.

Overview of the Findings

The information gleaned via qualitative comparisons of sample schools provides a greater context for the interpretation of the study's statistical findings. Given the statistically significant correlations observed among sample schools, findings suggest schools with higher rates of teachers with positive perceptions of school climate overall, have low rates of students reporting they have never gambled. However, the rate of abstention from gambling was also associated with students' perceptions of student relationships within sample schools, indicating that a high rate of students perceiving strong bonds with peers is associated with a low rate of students abstaining for gambling. This latter correlation is particularly interesting and warrants further exploration especially given the apparent prevalence of gambling behavior among sample school students. This finding suggests that gambling may be a bonding activity for students. Though Welsh (2001) noted the significance of schools in forming social connections (or forging social disconnections), gambling is unlikely to be a desired, or fruitful activity of camaraderie among 5th grade students.

More favorable teacher perceptions of school climate were positively correlated with high rates of student-reported abstention from the use of “other substances” (e.g. cigarettes, alcohol, uppers, etc.). Home perceptions of school climate were positively associated with rates of teaching experience, indicating that parents viewed schools more favorably when there were a greater number of new educators on staff. Counter to this observation however, parents/guardians perceived school climate more favorably in schools with high rates of teachers with a master’s degree. These two findings seem contrary, as one would expect high rates of master’s level teachers in sample schools with a high rate of seasoned professionals. Given the importance of parent involvement, as discussed previously, their perceptions of school climate are a particularly critical component of understanding this phenomenon (Sprague and Walker, 2005 and Bowen and Powers, 2005). Parent/guardian perceptions of overall school climate were positively correlated with rates of white teachers, while teacher perceptions of school climate were positively correlated with rates of teachers with at least a master’s degree within sample schools.

Similar to home and teacher/staff perceptions, findings indicate that perceptions of school climates are more favorable among students in sample schools with high rates of teachers with a master’s degree, therefore the more favorable the school climate, according to students, the more teachers with advanced degrees. Statistically significant correlations between rates of teachers with a master’s degree in sample schools were positively related to students’ perceptions of overall school climate, school safety, liking of school, and student-teacher-home relations. Students’ perceptions of the use of

punitive approaches to discipline were correlated with rates of teaching experience suggesting that less seasoned education professionals (i.e. less than 10 years of teaching experience) are more likely to use punitive approaches to discipline within the sample schools. Collectively, these findings indicate that teachers have a greater influence upon students than might be realized or targeted for school improvement purposes.

Further, statistically significant correlations were observed between school climate and general characteristics of sample schools. The higher the student to teacher ratios, the lower the students' perceptions of the fairness of school rules, suggests a relationship between the number of assigned students per teacher and the equitable enforcement of school rules. Students' perceptions of the use of punitive approaches to discipline were correlated with the number of suspensions issued over the 2006 school year. Sample schools with lower rates of students reporting the use of punitive discipline techniques within their schools had higher suspension rates per 100 students; this finding is counter to previous research studies. Also of surprise, students' perceptions of the use of punitive approaches to discipline were negatively correlated with the rate of student agreement with the statement "I stay away from certain parts of school to avoid trouble." The cumulative responses to "I feel safe in my school" among sample school students on the DATOD survey were positively correlated with students' perceptions of: overall school climate, the fairness of school rules, liking of school, relationships between students, and relationships among students their teachers and their homes.

The current research would be incomplete without granting consideration to student academic achievement given the enormity of concern and attention this topic

generates. Overall perceptions of school climate as reported by parents/guardians were significantly related to the rate of students meeting or exceeding state testing standards in the 5 subject areas, as were the overall perceptions of school climate as reported by students in sample schools. Additionally, the rate of students liking school was positively correlated with high rates of students meeting or exceeding state testing standards. Students' perceptions of school safety were also positively correlated with the rate of students meeting or exceeding state testing standards as well as student perceptions of student/teacher/home relationships. Though causality cannot be determined, it is important to note these correlations with academic outcomes that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Characteristics of Sample Schools – 13 Case Studies

The following pages summarize the qualitative findings from the content analyses of school websites, school profiles, and information available from www.greatschools.net. Each sample school case study is presented first through an introductory overview; followed by a one page summary of key school information and web site content (please note, in most cases, exact numbers are not reported or are rounded to minimize the potential for identification of sample schools); and finally, the case study concludes with a one page summary of the content analyses completed on sample schools' mission statements, goals for the 2006 academic year, and information

from www.greatschools.net. These pieces of information are uniformly displayed for each of the 13 sample schools.

Following each overview, a series of tables and charts provide a visual snapshot of each sample school. At the top of the one page snapshot, the pseudonym of the elementary school, the district, and setting in which it is located are indicated. On the upper-left-hand portion of this page the number of suspensions distributed during the school year is indicated with selection categories broken down into increments of 50. Just below the number of suspensions is an icon in the shape of Delaware with a star indicating the county in which the school of focus is located (i.e. the star in the top portion of the icon represents a school located in New Castle County, the star in the middle portion of the icon represents a school located in Kent County, and the star in the lower portion of the icon represents a school located in Sussex County). The series of stars just below the state-shaped icon represent the 2006 school performance rating; a key is offered following the description of each category below to connect the number of stars to sample school performance ratings (please see Table 4.1).

The school performance rating is an indicator used to track school progress and student performance over time, and serves as a means to monitor compliance with national legislation. The *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires all states to complete academic assessments of 3rd – 8th graders, and one high school grade, on an annual basis. The Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) appraises student comprehension in 5 content areas: reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. The outcome of each testing administration serves as the principal determinant of

school accountability ratings. This system of accountability enables the classification of schools into 1 of 5 possible categories. These categories, in descending order, are: superior, commendable, academic review, academic watch, and academic progress (<http://www.doe.state.de.us/news/2004/0802.shtml>).

Table 4.1 – Key for School Performance Rating Interpretations

School Performance Rating	Symbol
Superior	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Commendable	★ ★ ★ ★
Academic Review	★ ★ ★
Academic Watch – Under Improvement	★ ★
Academic Progress – Under Improvement	★

<http://www.doe.state.de.us/news/2005/0803.shtml>.

Just below the Delaware icon and performance rating stars in each summary chart is the total student population (rounded) and the sample schools’ student to teacher ratios (rounded to the nearest whole number) as reported in the 2006 academic year school profile reports. The middle portion of this summary page consists of 4 pie charts and one bar chart. The top two pie charts provide an illustration of the ethnic background of the students and teachers within the sample schools. Regrettably, the “other ethnicities” category includes persons of American Indian, Asian American, and Hispanic descent together due to the generally small numbers of persons in each of these 3 important categories. Just below the ethnicity charts are two pie charts which indicate the portion of special education students within sample schools and the years of teaching experience among sample schools’ educational staff (dichotomized as 9 or fewer years of teaching

experience and 10 or more years of teaching experience). The bar chart at the bottom of this middle section entitled “Low Income Students” represents the percentage of the schools population classified as low-income according to the 2006 school profile reports and compared to the median of low income sample school students.

Though it is unclear how the “low-income” rate reported in Delaware school profiles is calculated, according to the U.S. Department of Education’s website, <http://www.ed.gov>, a “low-income individual” in 2006 pertained to persons in families where the previous year’s taxable household income “...did not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level amount.” Poverty levels are determined annually by the United States Census Bureau and are made available via the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Federal Register (please see the Federal Register, Vol. 71, No. 15, January 24, 2006, pp. 3848-3849). It is reasonable to assume that a similar method to the one described above was used to determine low-income student populations in Delaware elementary schools as well. However, this could not be confirmed.

In the bottom right-hand corner of each chart summary page is a line graph depicting the rate of 5th grade sample school students meeting or exceeding state testing standards in the reading, mathematics, and writing content areas when compared to the sample schools' median rate in 2006. Finally, in the upper right-hand portion of the summary chart page is a list of website content germane to the present study. A review of school website content examined 3 primary areas: communication, school services and programs, and school policies and programs. Within each of these 3 categories are subcategories. Communication includes the presence or absence of information

specifically geared toward parents of children enrolled within the school of focus, the presence or absence of information for the local community, and the availability to subscribe to a school-published electronic newsletter. The school services and programs category indicates the presence or lack of information regarding school-based and/or school supported social services, mentoring opportunities, and information regarding the school's Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) initiative. The third and final category included in the study's school website content analysis pertains to school policies and programs. Information on school websites regarding anti-bullying and/or character education initiatives, and the posting of a school dress code were examined.

The page following the charts and summary of sample school websites displays two tables. The first or top table indicates the general contents of each school's mission statement and goals for the 2006 academic year. The second, smaller table below the mission statement and goals table includes a summary of the information collected from www.greatschools.net. The GreatSchools ratings reported at the top of the bottom table, are derived from comparisons of similar Delaware schools (i.e. grade structure) based upon calculations from the 2006 Delaware Student Testing Program in mathematics, reading, and writing. A perfect score (i.e. 10 out of 10) indicates a school with test scores in the top 10% when compared to scores across all like schools in the state. Therefore, a score of 10 out of 10 indicates that average student test performance in a particular school is equal to or greater than 90% of the schools in the state of a similar makeup. Likewise, a rating of a "1" indicates that the school ranks in the lowest 10% of schools of a similar type. GreatSchools' scores serve as an indicator for state level comparisons regarding

student performance on state testing subject areas and are derived from the average ratings for each grade level and subject area within a school.

Below the GreatSchool's ranking appears a list of six categories, to which parents may respond. Though not all sample schools had information, the following categories are scored by parents where 1 indicates unsatisfactory, 2 is below average, 3 is average, 4 is above average, and 5 is excellent in the areas of (1) overall school quality, (2) principal leadership, (3) teacher quality, (4) extracurricular activities, (5) parent involvement, and (6) safety and discipline. GreatSchools also provides visitors with the opportunity to share open-ended comments regarding their views of the school and offers principals the opportunity to respond to any posted comments. Parent comments from the 2006 school year are indicated in the table, if available, but none of the 13 schools had principal comments posted and are therefore excluded from the table.

As explained in detail above, pages 71 – 111 include summaries of each sample school, on page 112 a discussion of the qualitative research findings begins. Next, an in-depth comparison of sample schools across study indicators is shared. The chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of the statistically significant correlations observed in the current study before moving to the conclusions, which are presented in the final chapter of this dissertation.

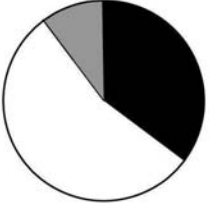
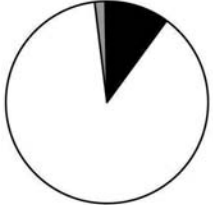
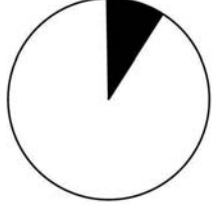
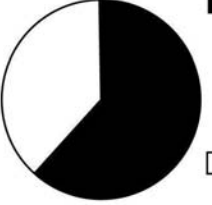

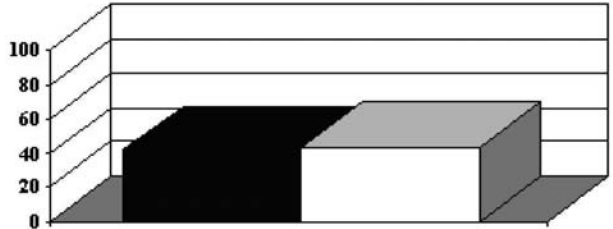
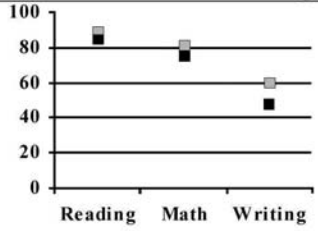
Case Study # 1 - High Hope Elementary School

High Hope Elementary School, a Superior school, is located in New Castle County in the Landis School District and is set in the urban fringe of a large city. High Hope Elementary School serves approximately 1,000 students in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. This school is 1 of 3 included in the current sample serving upper-elementary aged students exclusively. During the 2006 school year, over 300 suspensions were issued or 37 suspensions per 100 students. The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were equal to, or slightly above the study's 13 sample schools' averages during the same academic year. The majority of students in High Hope Elementary School (HHES) are white and the large majority of teachers at HHES are also white.

A review of the content presented on HHES's website found an emphasis on parent/school communications, availability of social services, and information regarding the school PBS (Positive Behavior Supports) model implementation. The HHES website also posts the student dress code guidelines, and shares information regarding the importance of the school's anti-bullying/character education initiative.

In an analysis of the HHES Mission Statement and 2006 Goals, expected areas of emphasis were addressed. Communication and partnerships between the school and home as well as the school and community were of noted importance. The significance of student academic achievement was clearly emphasized, as was the healthy social, emotional, and physical development of HHES students. The goals for the academic year

addressed parent involvement, school safety, and a productive and nurturing environment as influenced by the Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) model implementation.

School:	High Hope Elementary School	District:	Landis School District
Setting:	Urban Fringe of Large City	Grade Level:	4 th – 6 th Grades
Suspensions:	Students' Ethnicities  Teachers' Ethnicities 		School Website <u>Communication</u> School → Parents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School → Community <input type="checkbox"/> e-newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Services/Programs</u> Social Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Behavior Supports Program <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Policies/Programs</u> Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dress Code <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
0-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-100 <input type="checkbox"/> 101-150 <input type="checkbox"/> 151-200 <input type="checkbox"/> 201-250 <input type="checkbox"/> 251-300 <input type="checkbox"/> 300+ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Student Education  Teaching Experience 		
 ★★★★★			
Enrollment	Low Income Students 		2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing 
990 Students			
Students Per Teacher			
20			

High Hope Elementary School Content Analysis

Mission	Goals	Environment	Mission	Goals	Student Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

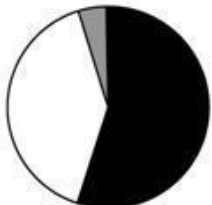
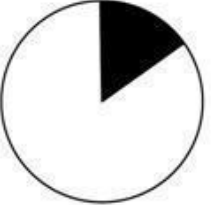
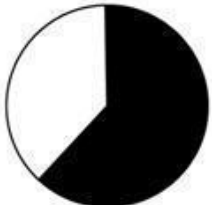


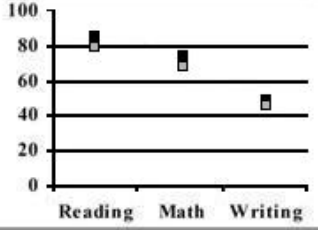
www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	6 out of 10
7 Parent Ratings:	
Overall Quality	Average
Principal Leadership	Average
Teacher Quality	Above Average
Extracurricular Activities	Average
Parent Involvement	Average
Safety and Discipline	Average
3 Parent Reviews <i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standoffish Administration • Great Teachers • Uncooperative Teachers • Unresponsive Teachers • Teaching for Testing v. Learning • Meager school

Case Study # 2 - Rosecroft Elementary School

Rosecroft Elementary School, a school under Academic Review, is located in New Castle County in the Landis School District and is set in a mid-sized central city. Rosecroft Elementary School serves approximately 600 students in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. During the 2006 school year, between 101 and 150 suspensions were issued or 18 suspensions per 100 students. . The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were slightly above the study's 13 sample schools' averages. The majority of students in Rosecroft Elementary School (RES) are African American and the large majority of teachers at RES are white.

A review of the content presented on RES's website found an emphasis on parent/school communications and the use of the PBS approach to student discipline. The RES website also notes the availability of an electronic newsletter which interested persons may request by submitting their email address and therefore be added to the e-newsletter distribution list. In an analysis of the RES Mission Statement and 2006 Goals, communication and partnerships between the school and home as well as the school and community were of noted importance. The significance of student academic excellence was clearly emphasized, as was social responsibility and the importance of children. A safe and structured environment was emphasized within the RES Mission Statement. The goals for the academic year also addressed student academic performance as well as parenting workshops, and a safe and positive environment cultivated by an inclusive

school improvement team comprised of administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and community members.

School:	Rosecroft Elementary School	District:	Landis School District
Setting:	Mid-Size Central City	Grade Level:	4 th – 6 th Grades
Suspensions:	Students' Ethnicities  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ African American □ White ■ Other Ethnicities 		School Website <u>Communication</u> School → Parents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School → Community <input type="checkbox"/> e-newsletter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Services/Programs</u> Social Services <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Behavior Supports Program <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Policies/Programs</u> Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input type="checkbox"/> Dress Code <input type="checkbox"/>
0-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-100 <input type="checkbox"/> 101-150 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 151-200 <input type="checkbox"/> 201-250 <input type="checkbox"/> 251-300 <input type="checkbox"/> 300+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Student Education  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Special Education □ Standard Education 		Teaching Experience  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 9 or Fewer Years □ 10 Years or More
 ★★	Low Income Students  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ School □ Sample 		
Enrollment 575 Students Students Per Teacher 16	2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sample ■ School 		

Rosecroft Elementary School Content Analysis

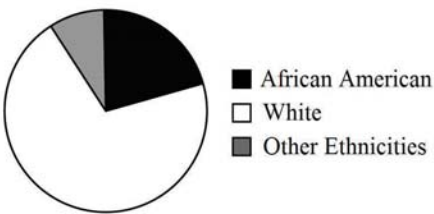
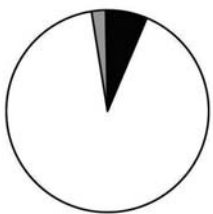

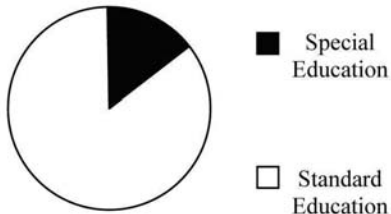
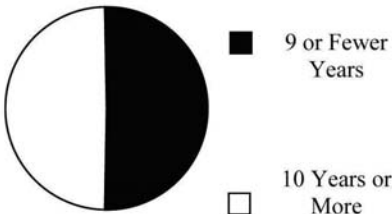
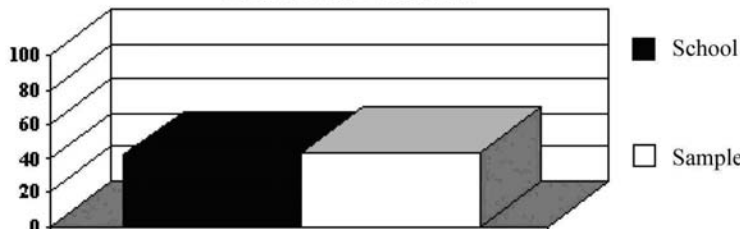
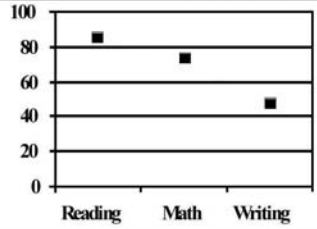
Mission	Goals	Environment	Mission	Goals	Student Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Academic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	4 out of 10
Overall Quality	n/a
Principal Leadership	n/a
Teacher Quality	n/a
Extracurricular Activities	n/a
Parent Involvement	n/a
Safety and Discipline	n/a
2 Parent Reviews <i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior School • Wonderful Principal/Administration • Quality Teachers • High Student Achievement • Positive Environment

Case Study # 3 - Harness Elementary School

Harness Elementary School is a Superior school, in Sussex County in the Byerly School District and is located in a rural setting. Harness Elementary School serves approximately 500 students in kindergarten through 5th grades. During the 2006 school year, less than 50 suspensions were issued or 13 suspensions per 100 students. . The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were equal to, or above the study's 13 sample schools' averages. The large majority of students and teachers at Harness Elementary School (HES) are white.

A review of the content presented on HES's website found an emphasis on parent/school communications, community/school relations, the availability of social services through the school, and student mentoring programs. In an analysis of the HES Mission Statement student academic performance and the healthy social, emotional, and physical development of HES students were noted. The goals for the academic year addressed health promotion, school climate, and school safety. The value of a positive, friendly, and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning was also indicated.

School:	Harness Elementary School	District:	Byerly School District
Setting:	Rural	Grade Level:	Kindergarten – 5 th Grades
Suspensions:	<p>Students' Ethnicities</p>  <p>Teachers' Ethnicities</p> 		<p>School Website</p> <p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>School → Parents <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>School → Community <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>e-newsletter <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><u>Services/Programs</u></p> <p>Social Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Positive Behavior Supports Program <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><u>Policies/Programs</u></p> <p>Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Dress Code <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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51-100 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
101-150 <input type="checkbox"/>			
151-200 <input type="checkbox"/>			
201-250 <input type="checkbox"/>			
251-300 <input type="checkbox"/>			
300+ <input type="checkbox"/>			
 <p>★★★★★</p>	<p>Student Education</p> 	<p>Teaching Experience</p> 	
Enrollment	<p>Low Income Students</p> 		<p>2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing</p>  <p>Sample School</p>
480 Students			
Students Per Teacher			
15			

Harness Elementary School Content Analysis

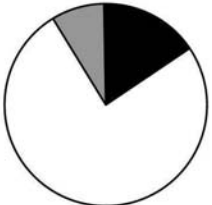
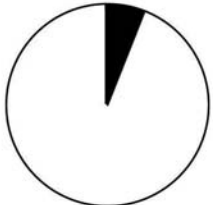

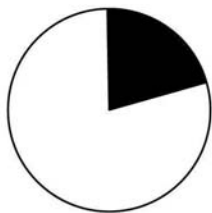
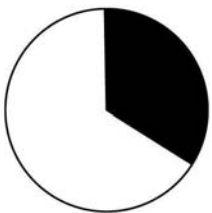
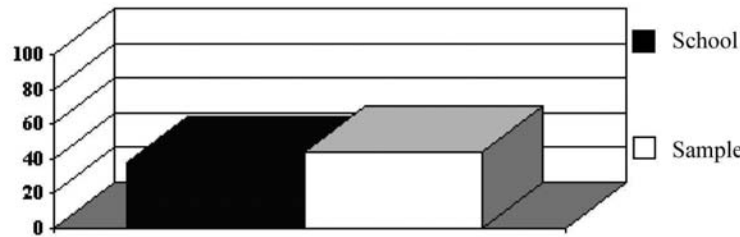
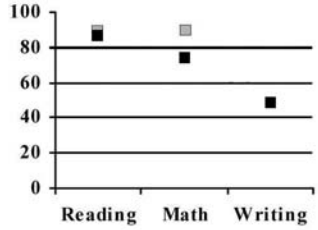
Mission	Goals	Environment	Mission	Goals	Student Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Academic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	5 out of 10
Overall Quality	n/a
Principal Leadership	n/a
Teacher Quality	n/a
Extracurricular Activities	n/a
Parent Involvement	n/a
Safety and Discipline	n/a
0 Parent Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None posted during 2006 school year
<i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	

Case Study # 4 - Pony-Star Elementary School

Pony-Star Elementary School is a Superior school in Sussex County, in the Byerly School District and is located in a rural setting. Pony-Star Elementary School serves approximately 550 students in kindergarten through 5th grades. During the 2006 school year, less than 50 suspensions were disseminated throughout the school (3 suspensions per 100 students). The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of the Delaware State Testing Program were equal to, or above the study's 13 sample schools' averages. The large majority of students and teachers at Pony-Star Elementary School (PSES) are white.

A review of the content presented on PSES's website found an emphasis on parent/school communications as well as community partnerships, availability of social services, and opportunities for mentoring a PSES student. In an analysis of the PSES Mission Statement and 2006 Goals, expected areas of emphasis were addressed. Communication and partnerships between the school and home as well as the school and community appeared essential. The significance of student academic achievement was clearly emphasized, as was the social well being of PSES students. The goals for the academic year addressed data driven decision-making, the value of technology, curriculum instruction, and an active PSES Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO).

School:	Pony-Star Elementary School	District:	Byerly School District			
Setting:	Rural	Grade Level:	Kindergarten – 5 th Grades			
Suspensions:	Students' Ethnicities  Teachers' Ethnicities 		School Website			
0-50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<u>Communication</u>			
51-100 <input type="checkbox"/>			School → Parents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
101-150 <input type="checkbox"/>			School → Community <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
151-200 <input type="checkbox"/>			e-newsletter <input type="checkbox"/>			
201-250 <input type="checkbox"/>			<u>Services/Programs</u>			
251-300 <input type="checkbox"/>			Social Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
300+ <input type="checkbox"/>			Mentoring <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Student Education	Teaching Experience	Positive Behavior Supports Program <input type="checkbox"/>			
			<u>Policies/Programs</u>			
			Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input type="checkbox"/>			
			Dress Code <input type="checkbox"/>			
Enrollment	Low Income Students					
535 Students						
Students Per Teacher						
15						
2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing						
						
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; gap: 20px;"> ■ Sample ■ School </div>						

Pony-Star Elementary School Content Analysis

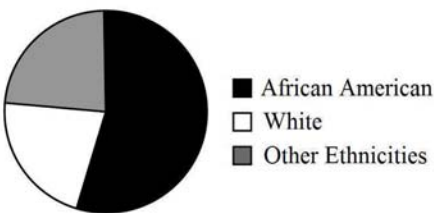
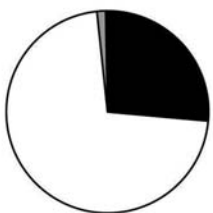
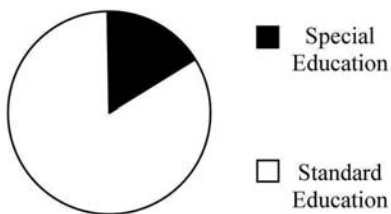
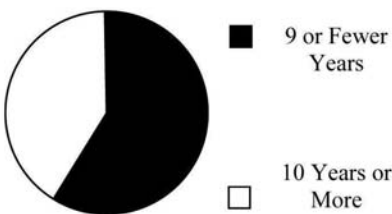


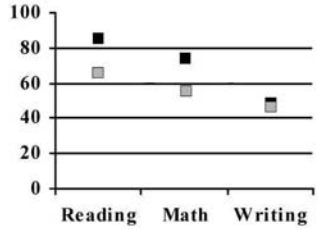
Mission	Goals	Environment	Mission	Goals	Student Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	7 out of 10
Overall Quality	n/a
Principal Leadership	n/a
Teacher Quality	n/a
Extracurricular Activities	n/a
Parent Involvement	n/a
Safety and Discipline	n/a
0 Parent Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None posted during 2006 school year
<i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	

Case Study # 5 - Bridle Elementary School

Bridle Elementary School, an Academic Progress – Under Improvement school, is located in New Castle County in the Harbold School District and is set in a mid-size central city. Bridle Elementary School serves approximately 900 students in kindergarten through 5th grades. During the 2006 school year, between 201 and 250 suspensions were issued school-wide or 24 suspensions per 100 students. The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were below the study's 13 sample schools' averages. The majority of students in Bridle Elementary School (BES) are African American and the large majority of teachers at BES are white.

A review of the content presented on BES's website found little information regarding the school, students, and staff. However, the option to subscribe to an online newsletter was indicated and may attend to topics other sample school websites addressed directly. In an analysis of the BES Mission Statement and 2006 Goals, expected areas of emphasis were addressed. Communication and partnerships between the school and home as well as the school and community were central to BES's Mission Statement. BES goals for the year concerned academic achievement and core state testing content areas.

School:	Bridle Elementary School	District:	Harbold School District																						
Setting:	Mid-Size Central City	Grade Level:	Kindergarten – 6 th Grades																						
Suspensions:	<div> Students' Ethnicities  </div> <div> Teachers' Ethnicities  </div>		School Website <table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Communication</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>School → Parents</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr> <td>School → Community</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr> <td>e-newsletter</td><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Services/Programs</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Social Services</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr> <td>Mentoring</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr> <td>Positive Behavior Supports Program</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Policies/Programs</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Anti-Bullying or Character Education</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> <tr> <td>Dress Code</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> </table>	<u>Communication</u>		School → Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	School → Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	e-newsletter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>Services/Programs</u>		Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Policies/Programs</u>		Anti-Bullying or Character Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dress Code	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Communication</u>																									
School → Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
School → Community	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
e-newsletter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>																								
<u>Services/Programs</u>																									
Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
Mentoring	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
Positive Behavior Supports Program	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
<u>Policies/Programs</u>																									
Anti-Bullying or Character Education	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
Dress Code	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
0-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-100 <input type="checkbox"/> 101-150 <input type="checkbox"/> 151-200 <input type="checkbox"/> 201-250 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 251-300 <input type="checkbox"/> 300+ <input type="checkbox"/>	<div> Student Education  </div> <div> Teaching Experience  </div>																								
 ★																									
Enrollment	Low Income Students 		2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing 																						
900 Students																									
Students Per Teacher																									
14																									

Bridle Elementary School Content Analysis

Mission	Goals	Environment	Mission	Goals	Student Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Academic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	2 out of 10
Overall Quality	n/a
Principal Leadership	n/a
Teacher Quality	n/a
Extracurricular Activities	n/a
Parent Involvement	n/a
Safety and Discipline	n/a
0 Parent Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None posted during 2006 school year
<i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	

Case Study # 6 - Saddle Elementary School

Saddle Elementary School, an Academic Watch – Not Under Improvement school located in New Castle County in the Harbold School District, is set in a mid-size central city. Saddle Elementary School serves approximately 1,100 students in kindergarten through 6th grades. During the 2006 school year, less than 50 suspensions, or 1 suspension per 100 students were issued at Saddle Elementary School. The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were below the study's 13 sample schools' averages. The majority of students in Saddle Elementary School (SES) are African American and the large majority of teachers at SES are white.

A review of the content presented on SES's website uncovered little information regarding the school, students, and staff. However, the option to subscribe to an electronic newsletter was available and may address issues other sample schools addressed directly via their websites. In an analysis of the SES Mission Statement and 2006 Goals, two common areas of emphasis emerged – the intellectual development of students, and the promotion of life-long learners. The SES goals for the year addressed academic achievement, state testing, and the importance of community and parent collaborations.

School:	Saddle Elementary School	District:	Harbold School District
Setting:	Mid-Size Central City	Grade Level:	Kindergarten – 6 th Grades
Suspensions:	Students' Ethnicities 		Teachers' Ethnicities
0-50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			School Website
51-100 <input type="checkbox"/>			<u>Communication</u>
101-150 <input type="checkbox"/>			School → Parents <input type="checkbox"/>
151-200 <input type="checkbox"/>			School → Community <input type="checkbox"/>
201-250 <input type="checkbox"/>			e-newsletter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
251-300 <input type="checkbox"/>			<u>Services/Programs</u>
300+ <input type="checkbox"/>			Social Services <input type="checkbox"/>
			Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/>
			Positive Behavior Supports Program <input type="checkbox"/>
			<u>Policies/Programs</u>
			Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input type="checkbox"/>
			Dress Code <input type="checkbox"/>
			2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing
			<div> <div>Reading</div> <div>Math</div> <div>Writing</div> </div>
			<div> <div>School</div> <div>Sample</div> </div>
Enrollment	Student Education 		
1080 Students	Teaching Experience 		
Students Per Teacher	Low Income Students 		
14			

Saddle Elementary School Content Analysis

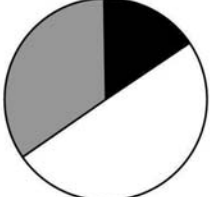
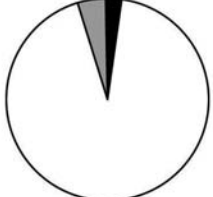
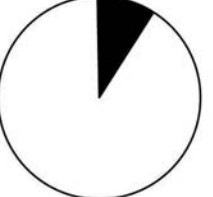
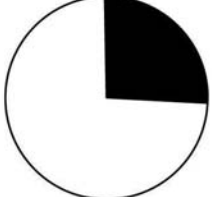

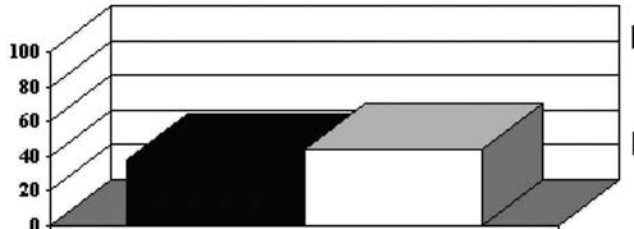
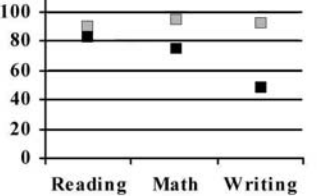
Mission	Goals	Environment	Mission	Goals	Student Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Academic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	2 out of 10
Overall Quality	n/a
Principal Leadership	n/a
Teacher Quality	n/a
Extracurricular Activities	n/a
Parent Involvement	n/a
Safety and Discipline	n/a
0 Parent Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None posted during 2006 school year
(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)	

Case Study # 7 - Victory Elementary School

Victory Elementary School, a Superior school, is located in New Castle County in the Harbold School District and is set in the urban fringe of a large city. Victory Elementary School serves approximately 525 students in kindergarten through 5th grades. During the 2006 school year, less than 50 suspensions were issued or 3 suspensions per 100 students. The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were above or well above the study's 13 sample schools' averages. Approximately half of Victory Elementary School (VES) students are white and the overwhelming majority of teachers at VES are also white.

A review of the content presented on VES's website uncovered little information regarding the school, students, and staff; however, the option to subscribe to an electronic newsletter was available and may address issues other sample schools addressed directly via their websites. In an analysis of the VES Mission Statement and 2006 Goals expected areas of emphasis were addressed. Communication and partnerships between the school and home as well as the school and community were of noted importance. The significance of fostering student creativity and intellectualism, as well as the utilization of diverse teaching methods were also of noted significance within the VES Mission Statement. The goals for the year addressed academic performance, professional developed for VES education staff, a diverse environment, and core testing content areas. The importance of character education was also noted within VES's list of 2006 goals.

School:	Victory Elementary School	District:	Harbold School District
Setting:	Urban Fringe of Large City	Grade Level:	Kindergarten – 5 th Grades
Suspensions:	Students' Ethnicities  Teachers' Ethnicities 		School Website <u>Communication</u> School → Parents <input type="checkbox"/> School → Community <input type="checkbox"/> e-newsletter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Services/Programs</u> Social Services <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Behavior Supports Program <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Policies/Programs</u> Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input type="checkbox"/> Dress Code <input type="checkbox"/>
0-50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 51-100 <input type="checkbox"/> 101-150 <input type="checkbox"/> 151-200 <input type="checkbox"/> 201-250 <input type="checkbox"/> 251-300 <input type="checkbox"/> 300+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Student Education  Teaching Experience 		
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★			
Enrollment	Low Income Students 		2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing 
520 Students			
Students Per Teacher			
15			

Victory Elementary School Content Analysis

Mission	Goals	Environment	Mission	Goals	Student Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Academic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	8 out of 10
3 Parent Ratings:	
Overall Quality	Excellent
Principal Leadership	Excellent
Teacher Quality	Excellent
Extracurricular Activities	Above Average
Parent Involvement	Excellent
Safety and Discipline	Excellent
0 Parent Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None posted during 2006 school year
<i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	

Case Study # 8 - Woodbine Elementary School

Woodbine Elementary School, a Superior school, is located in New Castle County in the Harbold School District and is set in the urban fringe of a large city. Woodbine Elementary School serves approximately 525 students in kindergarten through 5th grades. During the 2006 school year, less than 50 suspensions were issued or 7 suspensions per 100 students. The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were above the study's 13 sample schools' averages. The majority of students in Woodbine Elementary School (WES) are white and the large majority of teachers at WES are also white.

A review of the content presented on WES's website uncovered little information regarding the school, students, and staff. However, the option to subscribe to an electronic newsletter was available and may address issues other sample schools addressed directly via their websites. In an analysis of the WES Mission Statement identified areas of importance were: the social, emotional, and physical development of students; academic achievement; student creativity, intellectualism and empowerment; as well as a nurturing and innovative school environment. The 2006 Goals addressed student academic achievement, a positive school climate, staff development, state testing, compliance with the WES Code of Conduct, and a diverse and stimulating environment through the use of the Positive Behavior Supports model.

School:	Woodbine Elementary School	District:	Harbold School District
Setting:	Urban Fringe of Large City	Grade Level:	Kindergarten – 5 th Grades
Suspensions:	Students' Ethnicities 		School Website
0-50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teachers' Ethnicities 		<u>Communication</u>
51-100 <input type="checkbox"/>			School → Parents <input type="checkbox"/>
101-150 <input type="checkbox"/>			School → Community <input type="checkbox"/>
151-200 <input type="checkbox"/>			e-newsletter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
201-250 <input type="checkbox"/>			<u>Services/Programs</u>
251-300 <input type="checkbox"/>			Social Services <input type="checkbox"/>
300+ <input type="checkbox"/>			Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/>
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Student Education	Teaching Experience	Positive Behavior Supports Program <input type="checkbox"/>
			<u>Policies/Programs</u>
			Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input type="checkbox"/>
			Dress Code <input type="checkbox"/>
Enrollment	Low Income Students		2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing
525 Students			
Students Per Teacher			Reading Math Writing Sample School
17			

Woodbine Elementary School Content Analysis

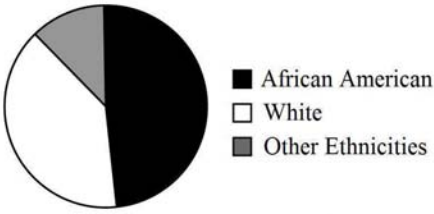
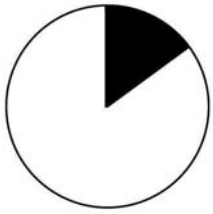

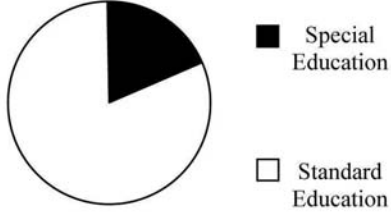
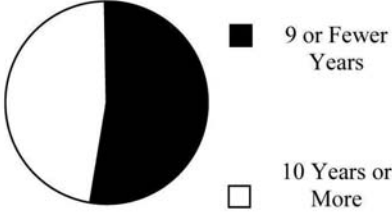
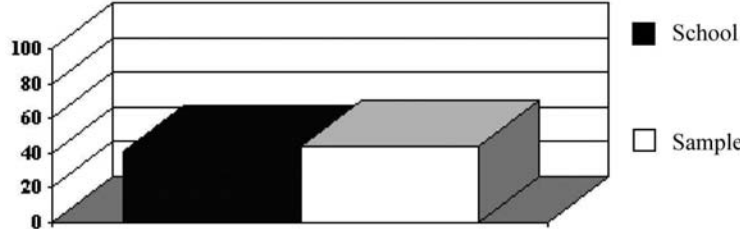
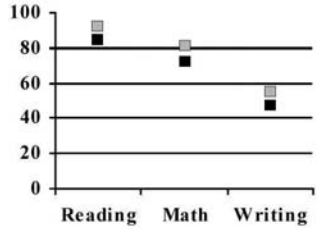
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	8 out of 10
Overall Quality	n/a
Principal Leadership	n/a
Teacher Quality	n/a
Extracurricular Activities	n/a
Parent Involvement	n/a
Safety and Discipline	n/a
0 Parent Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None posted during 2006 school year
<i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	

Case Study # 9 - Pride Elementary School

Pride Elementary School is a Superior school located in New Castle County in the Harbold School District and is set in the urban fringe of a large city. Pride Elementary School serves approximately 750 students in kindergarten through 5th grades. During the 2006 school year, less than 50 suspensions, or 2 suspensions per 100 students, were issued. The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were above the study's 13 sample schools' averages. Approximately half of the student body at Pride Elementary School (PES) is African American and the large majority of teachers at PES are white.

A review of the content presented on PES's website uncovered little information regarding the school, students, and staff. However, the option to subscribe to an electronic newsletter was available and may address issues other sample schools addressed directly via their websites. In an analysis of the PES Mission Statement and 2006 Goals, expected areas of emphasis were highlighted. Communication and partnerships between the school and home as well as the school and community were highlighted. The significance of student academic achievement was clearly indicated, as was the social and emotional success of PES students. Further, a safe, supportive, and caring environment are of noted priority. The goals for the year addressed student performance on standardized tests and the elimination of current achievement gaps.

School:	Pride Elementary School	District:	Harbold School District
Setting:	Urban Fringe of Large City	Grade Level:	Kindergarten – 5 th Grades
Suspensions:	Students' Ethnicities 		School Website
0-50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teachers' Ethnicities 		<u>Communication</u>
51-100 <input type="checkbox"/>			School → Parents <input type="checkbox"/>
101-150 <input type="checkbox"/>			School → Community <input type="checkbox"/>
151-200 <input type="checkbox"/>			e-newsletter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
201-250 <input type="checkbox"/>			<u>Services/Programs</u>
251-300 <input type="checkbox"/>			Social Services <input type="checkbox"/>
300+ <input type="checkbox"/>			Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/>
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Student Education	Teaching Experience	Positive Behavior Supports Program <input type="checkbox"/>
			<u>Policies/Programs</u>
			Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input type="checkbox"/>
			Dress Code <input type="checkbox"/>
Enrollment	Low Income Students		2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing
750 Students			
Students Per Teacher			<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> ■ School ■ Sample </div>
15			<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> Sample School </div>

Pride Elementary School Content Analysis

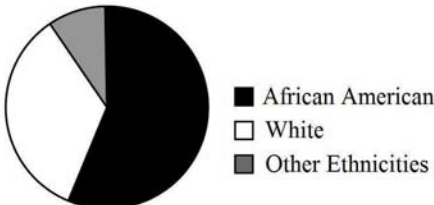

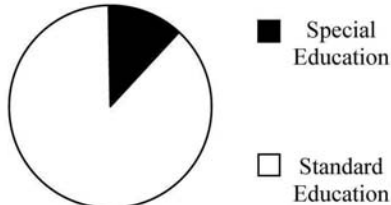
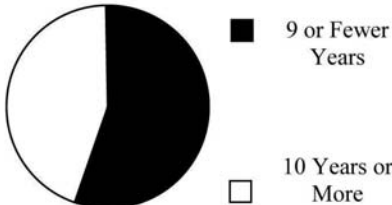
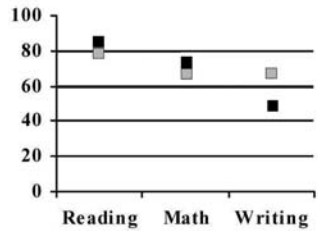
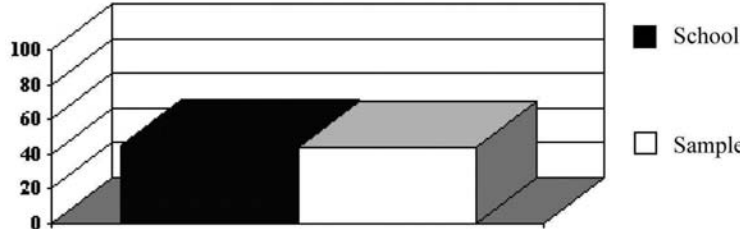
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	6 out of 10
Overall Quality	Above Average
Principal Leadership	Excellent
Teacher Quality	Above Average
Extracurricular Activities	Above Average
Parent Involvement	Above Average
Safety and Discipline	Excellent
0 Parent Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None posted during 2006 school year
<i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	

Case Study # 10 - Dan Patch Elementary School

Dan Patch Elementary School, a Superior school, is located in New Castle County in the McComsey School District and is set in the urban fringe of a large city. Dan Patch Elementary School serves approximately 450 students in kindergarten through the 5th grades. During the 2006 school year, less than 50 suspensions, or 4 suspensions per 100 students were disseminated throughout Dan Patch Elementary School. The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were nearly equal to the study's 13 sample schools' averages with a clear lead in the writing content area. The majority of students in Dan Patch Elementary School (DPES) are African American and the large majority of teachers at DPES are white.

A review of the content presented on DPES's website found an emphasis on parent/school communications, and the availability of social services through the school. In an analysis of the DPES Mission Statement, development of student communication, decision-making, and thinking skills, as well as human relations were emphasized with a focus on preparation for the future. The 2006 Goals for DPES addressed improving student attendance, creating a positive school climate, and student performance on State standardized tests.

School:	Dan Patch Elementary School	District:	McComsey School District
Setting:	Urban Fringe of Large City	Grade Level:	Kindergarten – 5 th Grades
Suspensions:	Students' Ethnicities 		School Website <u>Communication</u>
0-50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			School → Parents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
51-100 <input type="checkbox"/>			School → Community <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
101-150 <input type="checkbox"/>			e-newsletter <input type="checkbox"/>
151-200 <input type="checkbox"/>			<u>Services/Programs</u>
201-250 <input type="checkbox"/>			Social Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
251-300 <input type="checkbox"/>			Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/>
300+ <input type="checkbox"/>			Positive Behavior Supports Program <input type="checkbox"/>
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Student Education 	Teaching Experience 	<u>Policies/Programs</u> Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input type="checkbox"/> Dress Code <input type="checkbox"/>
	Enrollment 440 Students Students Per Teacher 15		2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing 
	Low Income Students 		Sample School

Dan Patch Elementary School Content Analysis

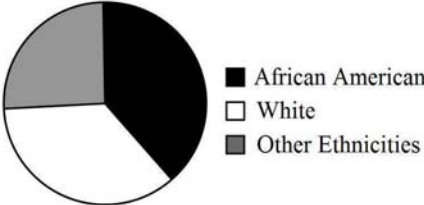
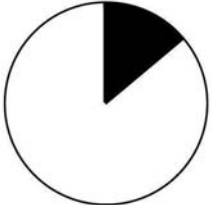
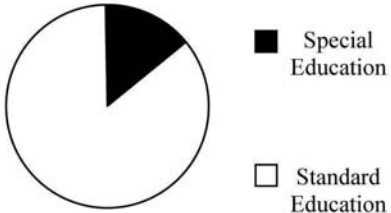
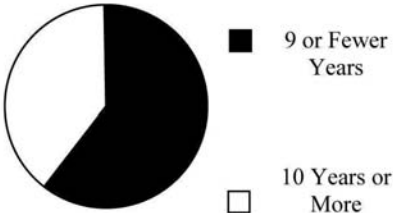


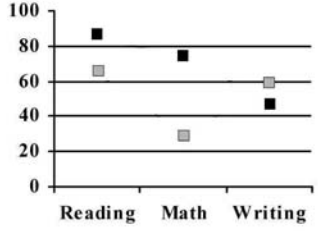
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	4 out of 10
Overall Quality	Excellent
Principal Leadership	Above Average
Teacher Quality	Excellent
Extracurricular Activities	Below Average
Parent Involvement	Excellent
Safety and Discipline	Above Average
0 Parent Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None posted during 2006 school year
<i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	

Case Study # 11 - Afton Love Elementary School

Afton Love Elementary School, an Academic Watch School – Not Under Review, is located in New Castle County in the McComsey School District and is set in the urban fringe of a large city. Afton Love Elementary School serves approximately 475 students in kindergarten through 5th grades. During the 2006 school year, less than 50 suspensions, or 7 suspensions per 100 students, were issued. The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were below the study's 13 sample schools' averages except in the writing content area where Afton Love Elementary School students were slightly above the sample schools' average. The student body at Afton Love Elementary School (ALES) is distributed in nearly equal thirds among African American, white, and other ethnicities; whereas the large majority of teachers at ALES are white with a small proportion of African American teachers.

A review of the content presented on ALES's website found an emphasis on parent/school communications, and the availability of school-based social services. The ALES website also provided visitors with the opportunity to sign up for an electronic newsletter. In the ALES Mission Statement attention was given to the preparation of students for the future, the importance of diversity within the school community, the empowerment of students, and the value of communication skills. The goals for the year addressed academic achievement, school safety, and a positive and orderly environment with assistance from the Positive Behavior Supports model implementation.

School:	Afton Love Elementary School	District:	McComsey School District
Setting:	Urban Fringe of Large City	Grade Level:	Kindergarten – 5 th Grades
Suspensions:	Students' Ethnicities  Teachers' Ethnicities 		School Website <u>Communication</u> School → Parents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School → Community <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> e-newsletter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Services/Programs</u> Social Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Behavior Supports Program <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Policies/Programs</u> Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input type="checkbox"/> Dress Code <input type="checkbox"/>
0-50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 51-100 <input type="checkbox"/> 101-150 <input type="checkbox"/> 151-200 <input type="checkbox"/> 201-250 <input type="checkbox"/> 251-300 <input type="checkbox"/> 300+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Student Education  Teaching Experience 		
 ★ ★	Low Income Students 		2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing 
Enrollment			
470 Students			
Students Per Teacher			
14			

Afton Love Elementary School Content Analysis

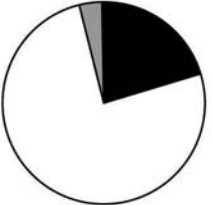
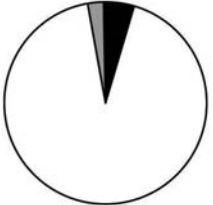
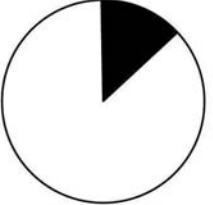
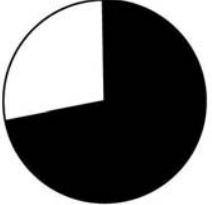

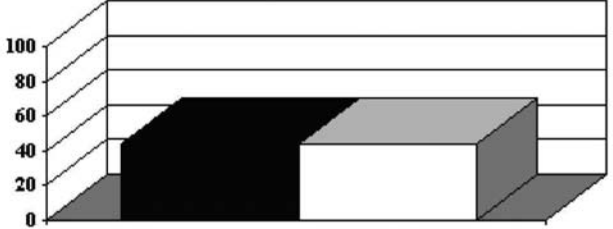
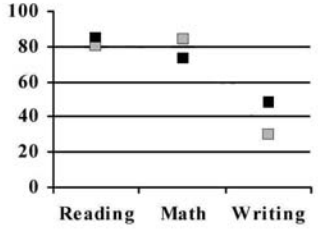
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	3 out of 10
3 Parent Ratings:	
Overall Quality	Above Average
Principal Leadership	Above Average
Teacher Quality	Above Average t
Extracurricular Activities	n/a
Parent Involvement	Average
Safety and Discipline	Above Average
0 Parent Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None posted during 2006 school year
<i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	

Case Study # 12 - Tallau Elementary School

Tallau Elementary School, a Superior school, is located in a rural part of Kent County within the boundaries of the Burrows School District. Tallau Elementary School serves approximately 600 students in the 5th and 6th grades. During the 2006 school year, between 51 and 100 suspensions, or 14 suspensions per 100 students, were issued throughout the school. The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were nearly equal to the study's 13 sample schools' averages. The majority of students in Tallau Elementary School (TES) are white and the large majority of teachers at TES are also white.

A review of the content presented on TES's website found an emphasis on parent/school communications and the availability of school-based social services. In an analysis of the TES Mission Statement and 2006 Goals expected areas of emphasis emerged. The importance of communication and partnerships between the school and home as well as the school and community were noted. Additionally, the significance of student academic performance, along with a safe school environment, and diverse educational opportunities for TES students was indicated. The goals for the academic year addressed parent as well as community involvement, school safety, student performance on standardized tests, professional development, and responsible student behavior.

School:	Tallau Elementary School	District:	Burrows School District
Setting:	Rural	Grade Level:	5 th – 6 th Grades
Suspensions:	Students' Ethnicities  Teachers' Ethnicities 		School Website <u>Communication</u> School → Parents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School → Community <input type="checkbox"/> e-newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Services/Programs</u> Social Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Behavior Supports Program <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Policies/Programs</u> Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input type="checkbox"/> Dress Code <input type="checkbox"/>
0-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-100 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 101-150 <input type="checkbox"/> 151-200 <input type="checkbox"/> 201-250 <input type="checkbox"/> 251-300 <input type="checkbox"/> 300+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Student Education  Teaching Experience 		
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★			
Enrollment	Low Income Students 		2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing 
590 Students			
Students Per Teacher			
17			

Tallau Elementary School Content Analysis

Mission	Goals	Environment	Mission	Goals	Student Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	5 out of 10
Overall Quality	n/a
Principal Leadership	n/a
Teacher Quality	n/a
Extracurricular Activities	n/a
Parent Involvement	n/a
Safety and Discipline	n/a
0 Parent Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None posted during 2006 school year
<i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	

Case Study # 13 - Hanover Elementary School

Hanover Elementary School, a Commendable school, is located in New Castle County in the Gordonier School District and is set in the urban fringe of a large city. Hanover Elementary School serves approximately 650 students in kindergarten through 5th grades. During the 2006 school year, between 251 and 300 suspensions, or 44 suspensions per 100 students, were issued. The rate of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, mathematics, and writing content areas of Delaware State Testing Program were equal to, or slightly below the study's 13 sample schools' averages. The student minority-group in Hanover Elementary School is African American with nearly equal rates of white students and students of other ethnicities, while the large majority of Hanover Elementary School teachers are white.

A review of the content presented on Hanover Elementary School's website found an emphasis on school-based social services, and access to the student dress code policy. In an analysis of the Hanover Elementary School Mission Statement student social and behavioral skills, academic excellence, and preparation for the future were stressed. The 2006 Hanover Elementary School Goals for the academic year addressed parent involvement, school climate, instructional techniques, and academic achievement.

School:	Hanover Elementary School	District:	Gordonier School District
Setting:	Urban Fringe of Large City	Grade Level:	Kindergarten – 5 th Grades
Suspensions:	Students' Ethnicities 		School Website <u>Communication</u> School → Parents <input type="checkbox"/> School → Community <input type="checkbox"/> e-newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Services/Programs</u> Social Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Behavior Supports Program <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Policies/Programs</u> Anti-Bullying or Character Education <input type="checkbox"/> Dress Code <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
0-50 <input type="checkbox"/>	Teachers' Ethnicities 		
51-100 <input type="checkbox"/>			
101-150 <input type="checkbox"/>			
151-200 <input type="checkbox"/>			
201-250 <input type="checkbox"/>			
251-300 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Student Education 		
300+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Teaching Experience 		
 ★ ★ ★ ★			
Enrollment	Low Income Students 		2005-2006 - 5th Grade Testing
660 Students			
Students Per Teacher			
17			

Hanover Elementary School Content Analysis

Mission	Goals	Environment	Mission	Goals	Student Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Academic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	3 out of 10
8 Parent Ratings:	
Overall Quality	Below Average
Principal Leadership	Below Average
Teacher Quality	Average
Extracurricular Activities	Below Average
Parent Involvement	Below Average
Safety and Discipline	Below Average
4 Parent Reviews <i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to Choice Out • Obstacles to Parent Involvement • Disappointment in Administration • Poor/Positive School Climate • Unsafe Environment • Unprofessional/Quality Teachers

Review of the Research Case Studies

Clearly, the sample schools are rather eclectic given that 7 were located in the urban fringe of a large city, 3 were located in a mid-size city, and the remaining 3 lay within rural settings. The large majority, 10 out of 13 of the sample schools, were traditional elementary schools serving kindergarten-aged through 5th or 6th grade-aged children. In only 3 schools, an intermediate-type school structure existed where upper elementary students (grades 4, 5, and 6) are served. A total of seven sample schools issued no more than 50 suspensions over the course of the 2006 school year. Most commonly, mission statements and goals addressed academic achievement (11 of the 13 sample schools) and 8 schools indicated the importance of parent involvement. GreatSchools rankings ranged from a low of 2 to a high of 8 (out of a possible high score of 10) with a mean of 5 for sample schools. Table 4.3 below provides a summary of sample schools' ranks relative to the sample median for each of the study's indicators.

Table 4.2 – Sample Schools’ Indicator Standings At-A-Glance

KEY:													
↑ High Score ↓ Low Score	High Hope	Rosecroft	Harness	Pony-Star	Bridle	Saddle	Victory	Woodbine	Pride	Dan Patch	Afton Love	Tallau	Hanover
General School Characteristics													
School Promotion Rates	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
Student to Teacher Ratios	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
School Choice Students	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Limited English Proficiency Students	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑
Low-Income Students	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Special Education Students	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
Student Enrollment	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑
School Safety													
Number of Suspensions	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑
School Crime Offenses	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑
Department of Education Offenses	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Incidents of Bullying	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓
Offensive Touching Incidents	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Fighting/Disorderly Conduct Incidents	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Students Feel Safe in their Schools	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓
Students Avoid Parts of the School	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
Students Report Fighting is a Problem	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Home Perceptions													
Overall School Climate	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓
School Staff													
Overall Perceptions of School Climate	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓
9 or Less Years of Teaching Experience	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓
Rate of Masters Level Teachers	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
Rate of Teachers of Other Ethnicities	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑
Rate of African American Teachers	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓
Rate of White Teachers	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓

Table 4.2 - Continued

KEY:	High Hope	Rosecroft	Harness	Pony-Star	Bridle	Saddle	Victory	Woodbine	Pride	Dan Patch	Afton Love	Tallau	Hanover
↑ High Score													
↓ Low Score													
Student Perceptions													
Use of Positive Discipline Techniques	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Use of Punitive Discipline Techniques	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
Overall School Climate	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓
Teacher/Student Relations	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓
Student Relations	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑
Rule Fairness	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓
Liking of School	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓
School Safety	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓
Student Characteristics													
Rate of African American Students	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓
Rate of White Students	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓
Rate of Students of Other Ethnicities	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑
Student Risk Behavior													
Alcohol Abstention	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
Abstention from Cigarettes	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
Marijuana Abstention	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓
Abstention from Inhalants	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Abstention from Other Substances	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
Students Reporting Never Stolen	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Students Reporting Never Gambled	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑
Try New Things Even Against the Law	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
Student Academic Performance													
Students Meeting Testing Standards	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓

Using the At-A-Glance Chart (please see pages 113-114), 31 indicators were identified (please see Table 4.3 below) along with what the most desirable status would be for a school to obtain (i.e. high or low). For example, one would hope to see high promotion rates but a low number of suspensions in a school. Further, schools would rather have a low rate of school crimes, and a high rate of students reporting that they feel safe in school. Please see Table 4.4 below for specific sample school findings.

Table 4.3 – Desired Status of Study Indicators

Indicator	Desired Status
School Promotion Rates	High
Students Feel Safe in their Schools	High
Home Perceptions of School Climate	High
Teacher/Staff Perceptions of School Climate	High
Use of Positive Discipline Techniques	High
Less Use of Punitive Discipline Techniques	High
Overall School Climate	High
Teacher/Student Relations	High
Student Relations	High
Rule Fairness	High
Liking of School	High
School Safety	High
Alcohol Abstention	High
Abstention from Cigarettes	High
Marijuana Abstention	High
Abstention from Inhalants	High
Abstention from Other Substances	High
Students Reporting Never Stolen	High
Students Reporting Never Gambled	High
Students Meeting Testing Standards	High
Students Avoid Parts of the School	Low
Students Report Fighting is a Problem	Low
Student to Teacher Ratios	Low
Student Enrollment	Low
Number of Suspensions	Low
School Crime Offenses	Low
Department of Education Offenses	Low
Incidents of Bullying	Low
Offensive Touching Incidents	Low
Fighting/Disorderly Conduct Incidents	Low
Try New Things Even if Against the Law	Low

Table 4.4 –Status of Study Indicators for Each Sample School

✓ Desired Status	High Hope	Rosecroft	Harness	Pony-Star	Bridle	Saddle	Victory	Woodbine	Pride	Dan Patch	Afton Love	Tallau	Hanover
School Promotion Rates	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				
Student to Teacher Ratios			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		
Student Enrollment		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		
Number of Suspensions				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
School Crime Offenses			✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Department of Education Offenses						✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Incidents of Bullying		✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Offensive Touching Incidents						✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fighting/Disorderly Conduct Incidents						✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Students Feel Safe in their Schools			✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	
Students Avoid Parts of the School	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Students Report Fighting is a Problem		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	
Homes' Overall School Climate			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
Teachers' Overall School Climate		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓			
Use of Positive Discipline			✓			✓				✓	✓		✓
Little Use of Punitive Discipline	✓	✓			✓						✓	✓	✓
Overall School Climate			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		
Teacher/Student Relations			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		
Student Relations			✓	✓			✓		✓		✓		✓
Rule Fairness			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		
Liking of School			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		
School Safety			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		
Alcohol Abstention		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				
Abstention from Cigarettes	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓				
Marijuana Abstention	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓			✓	
Abstention from Inhalants			✓		✓				✓	✓		✓	✓
Abstention from Other Substances	✓												
Students Reporting Never Stolen					✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Students Reporting Never Gambled		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓				✓
Try New Things Even Against the Law	✓				✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Students Meeting Testing Standards	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				

Table 4.4 – Continued

Total Desirability Points (TDP)	8	8	20	22	5	12	24	15	24	14	19	10	11
TDP without Suspensions	8	8	20	21	5	12	23	15	23	14	18	10	11
Sample School Rankings (1-13)	11	11	4	3	13	8	1	6	1	7	5	10	9

After summing all of the “desirability points,” the schools were ranked as follows:

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Elementary School Name</u>
1	25	Pride
1	25	Victory
3	23	Pony-Star
4	21	Harness
5	19	Afton Love
6	14	Dan Patch
6	14	Woodbine
8	12	Saddle
9	11	Hanover
10	10	Tallau
11	9	Rosecroft
12	8	High Hope
13	6	Bridle

A review of the top 5 schools’ commonalities reveals that all 5 are set up as kindergarten through 5th grade configurations and the number of suspensions did not exceed 100 during the 2006 school year. The bottom 5 schools on the other hand, differed from the top-ranked schools on both of these indicators. All 3 of the intermediate schools in the sample were in the bottom 5 schools. Of the remaining “bottom” 5 schools, one is a K-5 serving school, and the other is a K-6 school. All 5 of the bottom-ranked schools issued more than 100 suspensions during the same school year, with one exceeding 300. Given that a common expectation might be that older students are given more suspensions, these rankings were also examined without the use of suspension rates to

ensure that unfair disparities did not arise due to the selected methodology. Despite the elimination of the suspension indicator, the rankings did not change, therefore suggesting that the desirability rankings were not unduly influenced by the age of the student population.

Though none of the 5 bottom schools widely shared any of the 31 indicators in terms of status, 8 indicators were shared among all 5 of the top sample schools. These shared indicators are:

- low student to teacher ratios;
- high rates of students reporting that they feel safe in school (DATOD item level indicator);
- favorable student perceptions of school climate;
- favorable student perceptions of the relationships between students, their teachers, and homes;
- favorable student perceptions of relationships among students;
- high rates of students reporting that school rules are fair;
- high rates of students reporting that they like their school; and
- high rates of students reporting favorable perceptions of school safety as measured by the Delaware School Climate Survey: School Safety Subscale.

Further, the top ranking sample schools shared the following 10 indicators in 4 out of 5 cases: low student enrollment; low numbers of suspensions administered during the 2006 school year; a low number of school crimes per 100 students; low rates of students

reporting that fighting is a problem in their schools; high rates of teachers' and school staff's as well as homes' perceptions of a favorable school climate overall; high rates of students' self-reported abstention from alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana; a high rate of sample school students reporting that they have never gambled or bet for profit or possessions; and a high rate of students meeting state testing standards in the 5 content areas (i.e. reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies).

Interestingly, of the additional indicators, which could not be assigned a desirability status, none of the schools in the top or bottom 5 widely shared ranks on any of these indicators (e.g. rates of special education students, or rates of teachers with a master's degree or more). A review of sample schools' websites, mission statements, goals, and information from www.greatschools.net offered little insight into the similarities and differences among the sample. Table 4.5 below offers a summary of the content analyses completed on each of the sample schools.

Table 4.5 – Snapshot of Content Analyses Findings

Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High Score on Desirability Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Low Score on Desirability Ranking	High Hope	Rosecroft	Harness	Pony-Star	Bridle	Saddle	Victory	Woodbine	Pride	Dan Patch	Afton Love	Tallau	Hanover
Mission Statement													
Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Goals													
Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mission Statement and School Goals													
Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
School Website													
School/Parent Communication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School/Community Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e-newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mentoring program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive Behavior Supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Character Education/Bullying Prevention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dress Code	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GreatSchools Score	6	4	5	7	2	2	8	8	6	4	3	5	3

Comparison of Sample Schools Across Study Indicators

Figure 4.2 below depicts the racial background of the entire sample schools' student body. Though the literature has indicated associations between student ethnicity and school climate, (e.g. Stewart, 2003) this relationship was not observed in the current study. Interestingly, there is a fair level of ethnic diversity among students in all 13 of the study's sample schools. Given the benefits of a diverse environment, provided the environment is culturally sensitive, this is an interesting observation even void of statistically significant differences (Marx, et. al., 1998).

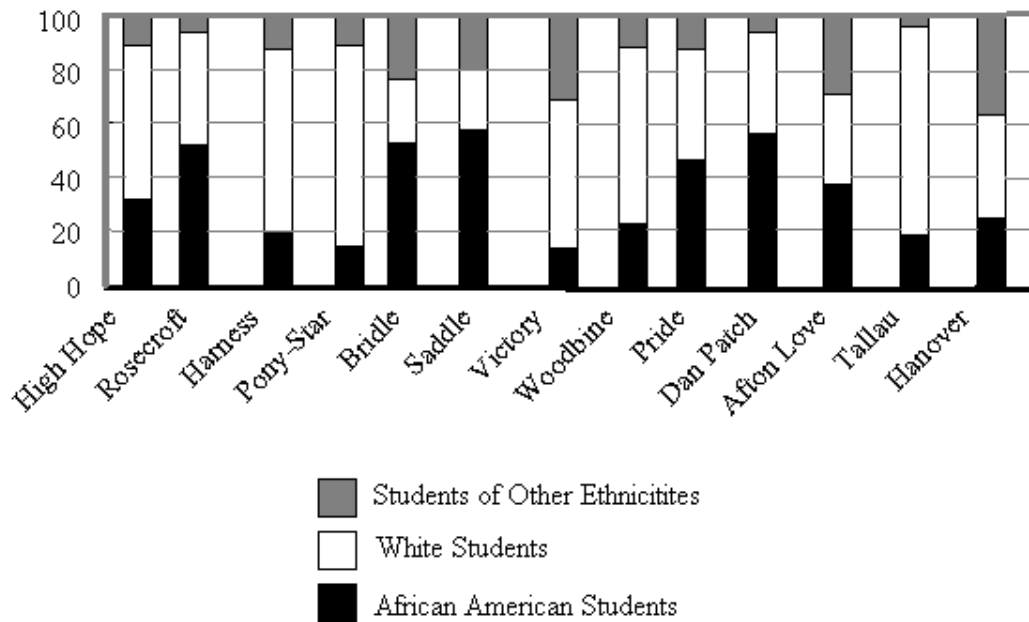


Figure 4.2 - Student Ethnicities

Figure 4.3 below displays the rates of student at each school in various categories. Of the four categories included in Figure 4.3, rates of low-income students, rates of limited English proficiency students, and rates of special education students are of particular interest as they are specified categories of focus outlined by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation of 2001. Further, the addition of the rate of choice students in this chart is relevant due to the NCLB school choice requirement, empowering students and their parents to opt out of persistently dangerous or poorly performing schools and into another school of their choosing (www.nochildleftbehind.gov).

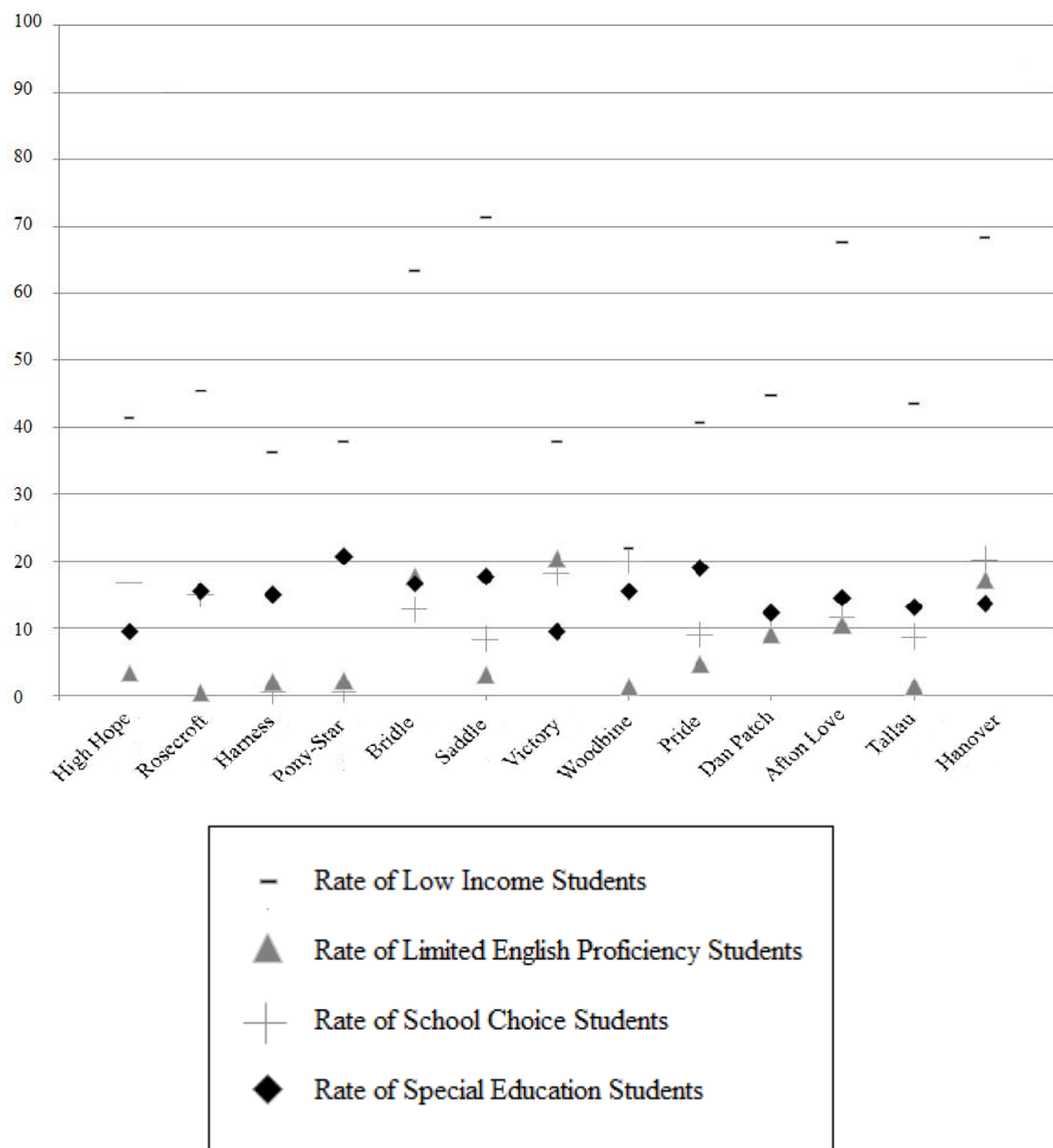


Figure 4.3 - Special Student Population Rates

In the following charts, “high” rated schools indicate schools with high rates of students reporting they have never engaged in the illegal use of various substances. A review of alcohol use, use of cigarettes, marijuana, and the use of other substances shows 9 out of the 13 sample schools were classified in the same group (i.e. high or low) across all four variables. Harness Elementary School, Pony-Star Elementary School, Victory Elementary School, and Pride Elementary School all have high rates of students reporting they have never drunk, never smoked cigarettes, never used marijuana to get high, nor have they ever used other types of substances for this purpose. Whereas, Bridle Elementary School, Saddle Elementary School, Dan Patch Elementary School, Tallau Elementary School, and Hanover Elementary School, all have low rates of students reporting they have never drunk, never smoked cigarettes, never used marijuana to get high, nor have they ever used other types of substances to get high (Please see Figure 4.4 below).

In the student reported *Abstention from Alcohol, Cigarettes, Marijuana and Other Substances* chart below, indicators are first arranged by the names of the 13 elementary schools in the sample, and each school has a rate associated with the use of “other substances”, the use of marijuana, the use of cigarettes, and the drinking of alcohol. For interpretive purposes, patterned bars are preferable to solid colored bars, as patterned bars indicate high levels of abstention from these various substances. In the present study, the substance use variable is actually a composite measure that includes cigars, clove cigarettes, various tobacco products, hallucinogens, downers, uppers, and powdered cocaine. It is important to point out that none of the 13 samples schools have more than

3% of its students reporting the use of these substances, even just one time. Though concerning that any school-aged child might have experimented with these substances, the overwhelming majority of 5th grade students in sample schools are choosing to abstain from the use of such substances or are not in situations where the opportunity to experiment with these substances are presented.

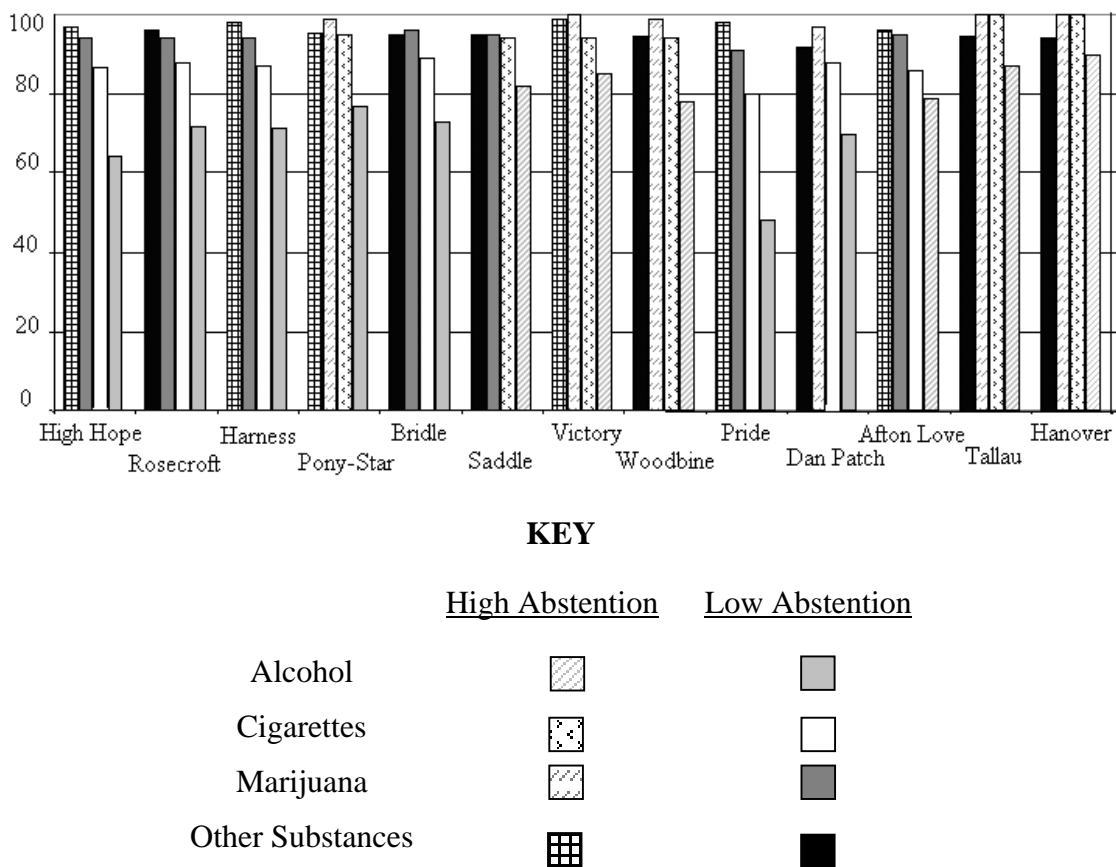


Figure 4.4 - Abstention from Alcohol, Cigarettes, Marijuana, & Other Substances

As previously mentioned, the decision to examine inhalants individually was due to the availability of the substances typically used in this fashion. For example, glue, various sprays, and even gasoline can be inhaled by individuals to alter one's state of mind, are generally available to any age group, and are found in common locations. In each of the sample cases, students were more likely to report some level of cigarette use over any of the other substances examined, followed by the use of alcohol. However, student reported rates of inhalant use were higher than student reported rates of marijuana use in 8 of the 13 sample schools, while 2 schools had nearly equal rates of use between marijuana and inhalants. This gives credence to the thought that availability might have some implications for this particular method of altering one's mental state. However, by-and-large, 5th grade sample school students were using or experimenting with cigarettes and alcohol at greater rates than inhalants, marijuana, or other substances.

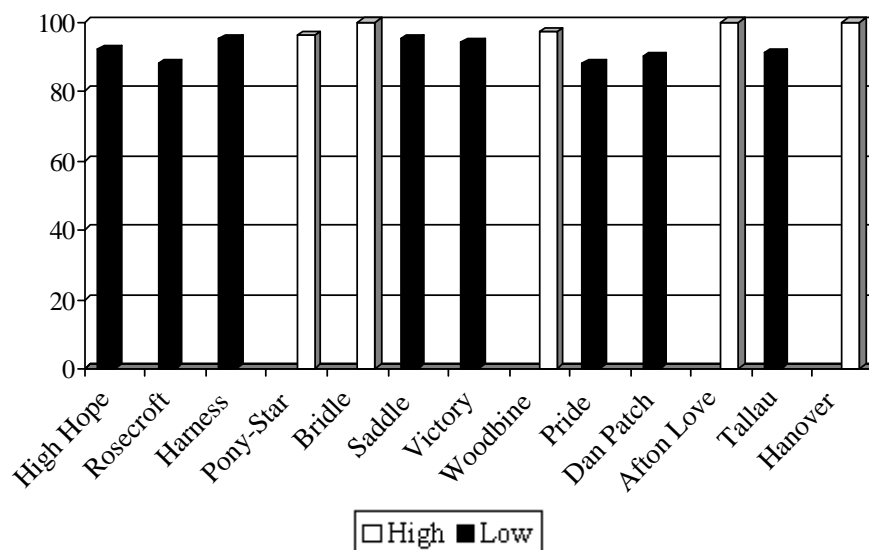


Figure 4.5 - Student Self-Reported Abstinence from Inhalants

The large majority of students in all 13 sample schools do not report gratification from trying things that may be against the law. However, there is a difference in terms of “high” and “low” sample schools. In the 7 low schools, between 95% and 100% of students disagreed with the statement “I like to try new or exciting things, even if they are against the law,” whereas their 6 high scoring counterparts generally hovered around 90% of students disagreeing with this statement. Please refer to Figure 4.6 below.

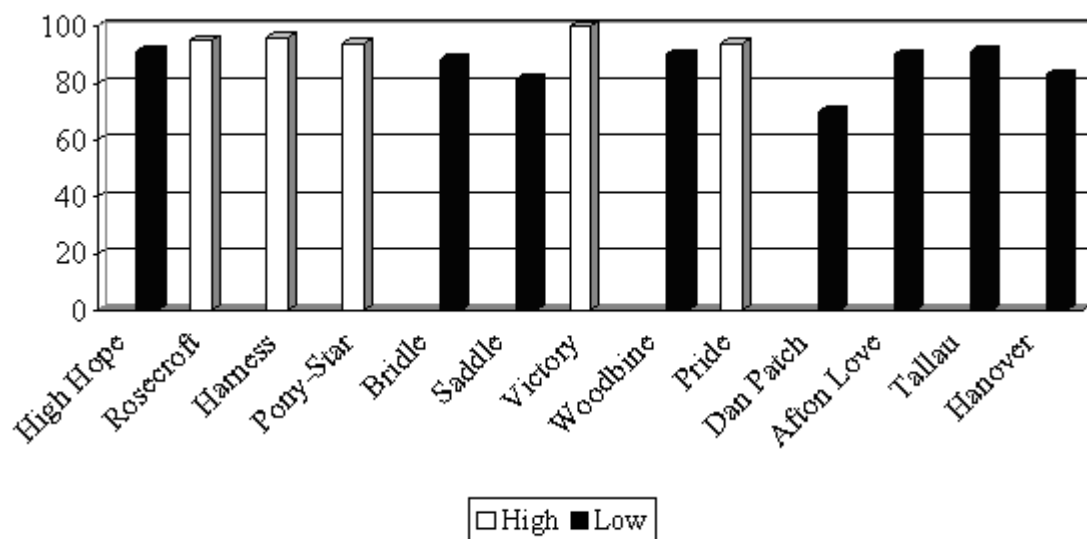


Figure 4.6 - Rate of Students that Like Trying New Things, Even if Against the Law

Generally, patterns among students are similar when comparing abstention from various substances and their propensity to break the law. However, the rates of students in all sample schools reporting gratification from partaking in new or exciting things, regardless of the potential legal consequences, is concerning. One might anticipate that schools with students reporting high abstention rates would also have low rates on this

measure; however, this was not always the case within this sample population. Please refer to Figure 4.7 below for more detail on each of these indicators' rates within the study's 13 sample schools.

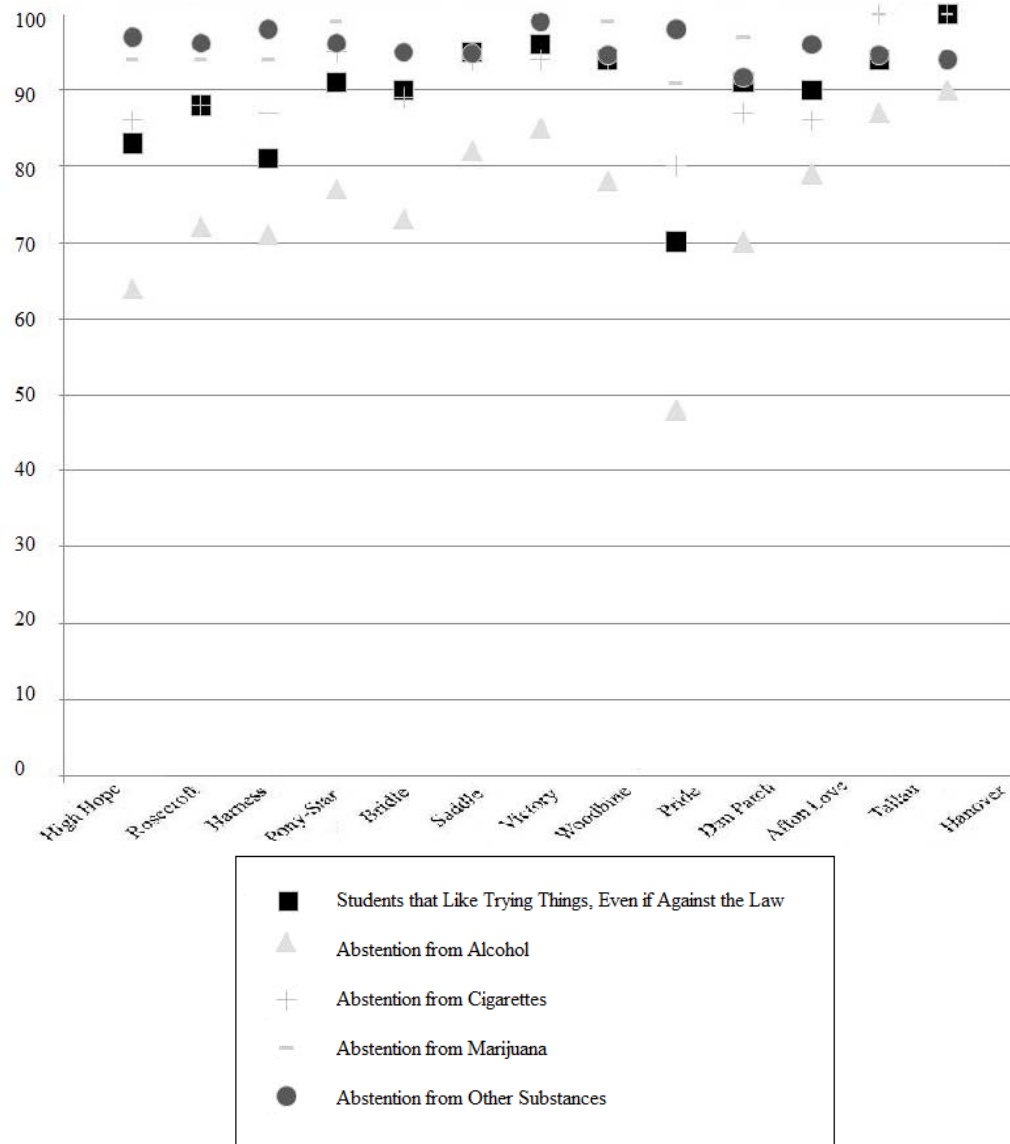


Figure 4.7 - Rate of Students that Like Trying New Things, Even if Against the Law, and Abstain from Alcohol, Cigarettes, Marijuana, and Other Substances

The incidence of gambling among 5th graders in sample schools is concerning (Please refer to Figure 4.8 below). In nearly all sample schools, at least 20% of the respondents have engaged in some form of gambling for possessions or monetary profit; and astoundingly, in one sample school, half of the responding students participated in such activities. Though gambling behaviors were not the focus of this study, rather an indicator for sample schools' students' engagement in known risk behaviors, these behavioral engagement patterns indicate a need for further exploration of the incidence and prevalence of gambling among Delaware elementary school students.

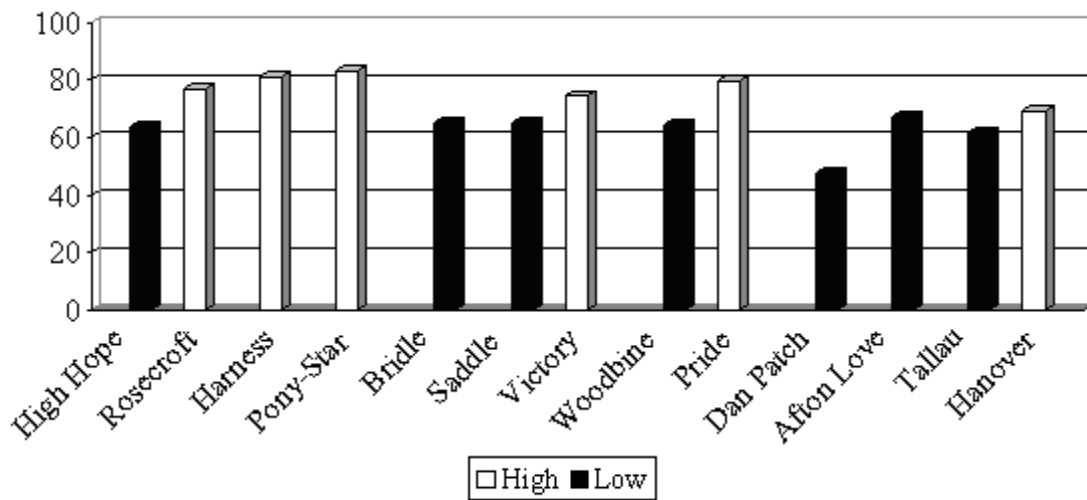


Figure 4.8 - Student Self-Reports that they have Never Gambled or Bet

In all but one sample school, the large majority of student respondents admitted they took “something that didn’t belong” to them while at school. Though details are not

available regarding what items are being stolen, from whom, and at what frequency, this information is important to acknowledge. Akin to the gambling indicator addressed above, though stealing is not a central theme in the present study, the high reporting rates of theft among sample school respondents warrants further exploration as well.

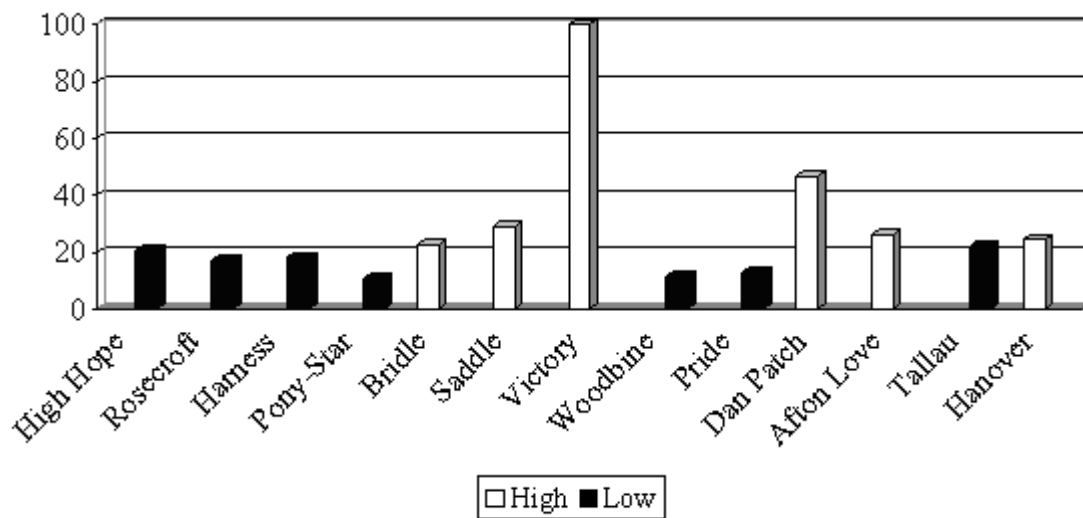


Figure 4.9 - Student Self-Reports that they have Never Stolen Something

The aspects of school climate, as measured by the *Delaware School Climate Survey*, will be discussed later in the chapter; however, some indicators of this phenomenon related to student perceptions of their safety and security while in school were examined through items on the *Delaware Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Abuse Survey* (DATOD) and are important to discuss. Specifically, 5th grade respondents were asked to answer “yes” or “no” in response to the following three statements:

- I feel safe in my school;
- I stay away from certain parts of school to avoid trouble; and
- Fighting is a problem in this school.

Please refer to Figure 4.10 below for an overview of sample school rates on these 3 measures.

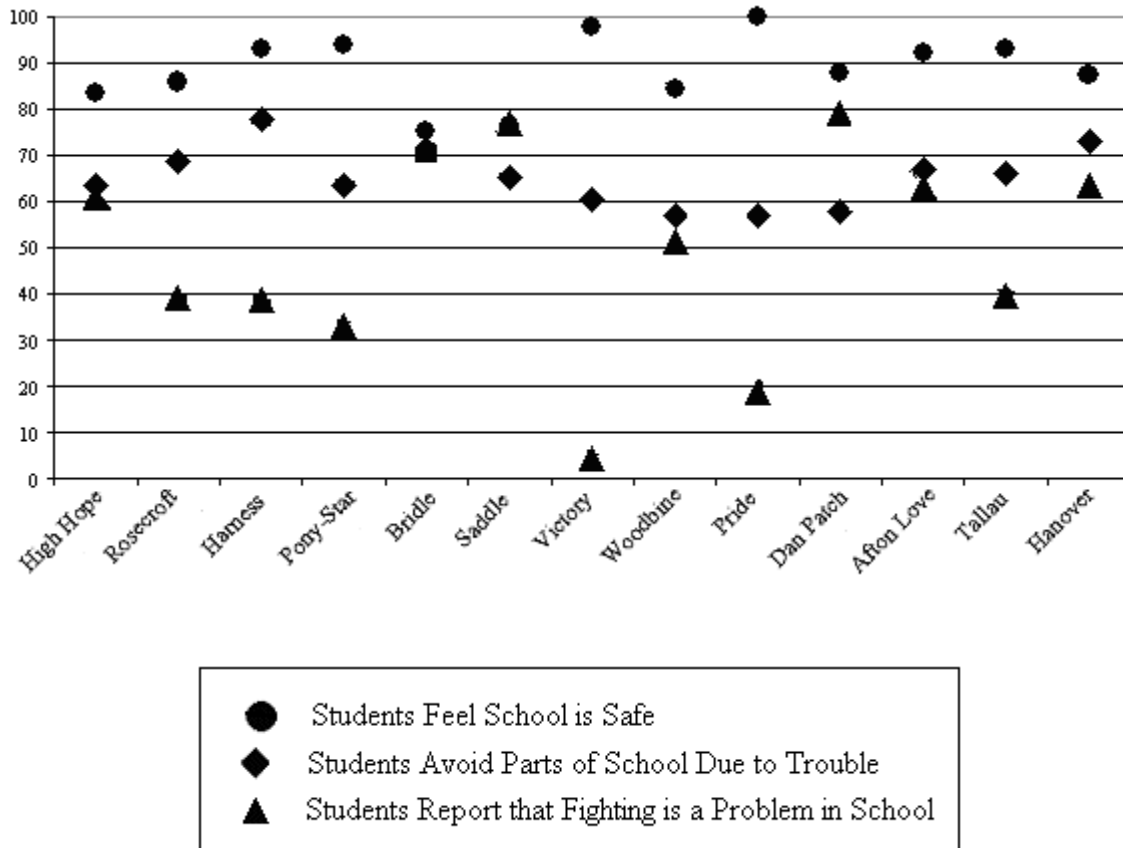


Figure 4.10 - Student Reports on the DATOD Regarding School Safety, Avoidance of Certain School Locations, and Incidents of Fighting in their Schools

With regard to student feelings of safety, a “low” classification indicates a low rate of students feeling safe in their respective schools. Therefore, within the sample population, the “high” classification indicates schools with a higher rate of students who feel safe when compared to their “low” rated sample school counterparts. The “high” rated sample schools on this indicator of safety in school include: Harness Elementary School, Pony-Star Elementary School, Victory Elementary School, Pride Elementary School, Afton Love Elementary School, and Tallau Elementary School, whereas the “low” schools are High Hope Elementary School, Rosecroft Elementary School, Bridle Elementary School, Saddle Elementary School, Woodbine Elementary School, Dan Patch Elementary School, and Hanover Elementary School.

Regarding the indicator discussed above, feeling safe in school, a high rate is preferable; however, a high rate of students agreeing with the statement “I stay away from certain parts of the school to avoid trouble” is clearly undesirable. Despite the high/low comparisons made herein, it is concerning that in all 13 sample schools, over 50% percent of students admit, “I stay away from certain parts of the school to avoid trouble.” As indicated in Stewart’s (2003) research and discussed in Chapter 2, this is a significant concern, which could be addressed via an increase in adult supervision in school building “problem areas.” The details regarding who is avoiding, where these avoided locations are, and why they are avoided, are pieces of information that beg for a focused investigation to uncover information necessary to ensure that undesirable activities cease.

Finally, a low designation for schools is more desirable on the DATOD item regarding fighting. Nonetheless, even in “low” ranked sample schools, in the majority of cases at least 20% of 5th grade students believe that fighting is a problem within their respective schools. Please refer to Figure 4.10 below for a summary of these three DATOD school climate-related items.

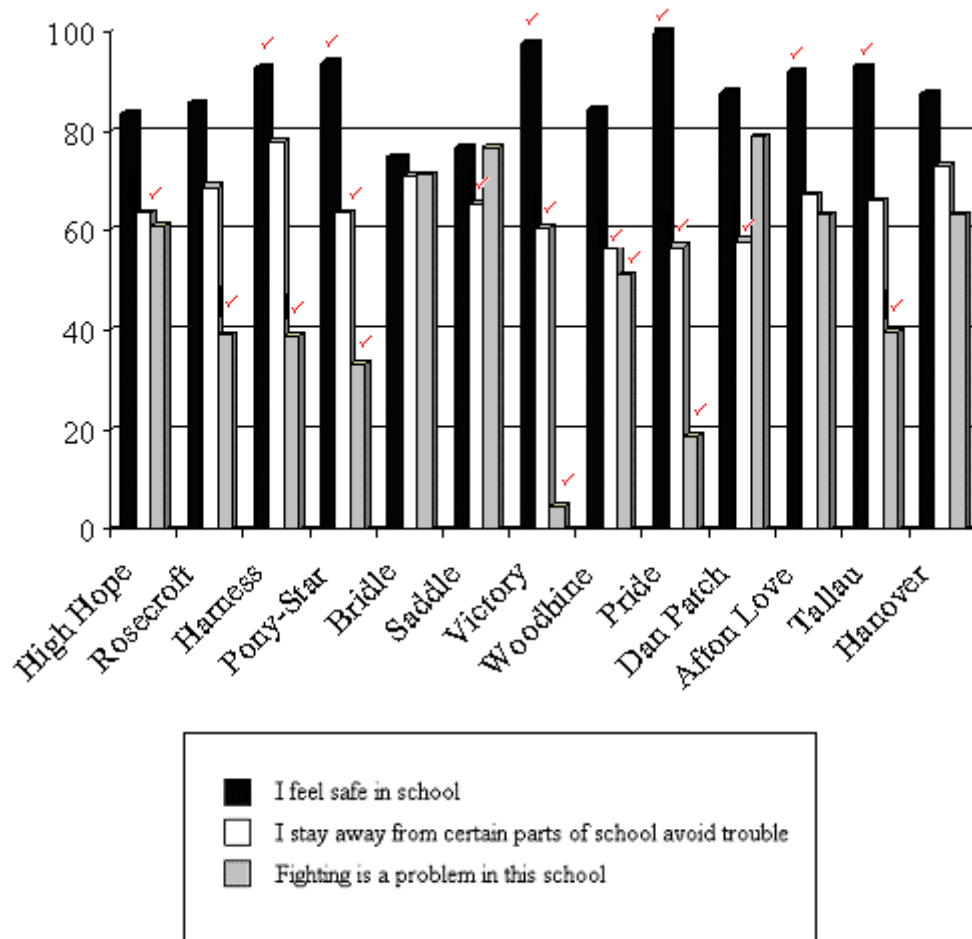


Figure 4.11 - DATOD School Climate Related Items – Safety, Avoidance, and Fighting

In the above chart, the check marks located above certain bars indicate a more desirable ranking (i.e. high or low). Ideally schools would have high rates of students feeling safe in their schools, low rates of students reporting that they stay away from certain parts of school to avoid trouble, and low rates of students reporting that fighting is a problem in their school. This ideal scenario is present in only three of the 13 sample schools: Pony-Star Elementary School, Victory Elementary School, and Pride Elementary School. Two additional sample schools scored in direct opposition to the preferred conditions. Bridle Elementary School and Hanover Elementary School when compared to the sample schools' median score on each of these variables, were both observed to have low rates of students feeling safe, high rates of students reporting that they stay away from certain parts of school to avoid trouble, as well as high rates of students reporting that fighting is a problem in their school.

The use of suspensions and frequency with which they are distributed are pronounced topics in discipline discussions today. The raw number of suspensions administered in sample schools varied widely. The actual number of suspensions administered in each sample school was reported on sample schools' chart summary pages presented earlier in this chapter. This variable appears to have bifurcated results in terms of extremes within the sample. All "low" suspension schools disseminated less than 50 suspensions over the course of the 2006 school year, while their "high" suspension-distributing counterparts administered over 100 suspensions during that same time period. The interpretation of this result warrants caution given that the highest numbers of suspensions administered were in the schools serving older elementary school

students exclusively (i.e. 4th, 5th, and 6th grades). Overall, the number of suspensions seems modest among sample schools; however, 10 out of 13 schools are traditional elementary schools serving students in kindergarten through the 5th or 6th grades. The 3 intermediate schools, included in the sample are High Hope Elementary School (HHES serves 4th – 6th grade), Rosecroft Elementary School (RES serves 4th – 6th grade), and Tallau Elementary School (TES serves 5th – 6th grade). Therefore, in an attempt to more fairly compare sample schools on this indicator, suspensions per 100 students were calculated (Please refer to Table 4.6 and Figure 4.12 below).

Table 4.6 - Grade Configurations and Suspensions per 100 Students

Grade Configuration	Elementary School	Suspensions per 100 Students
4 th , 5 th , and 6 th	High Hope	37
4 th , 5 th , and 6 th	Rosecroft	18
Kindergarten through 5 th	Harness	13
Kindergarten through 5 th	Pony-Star	3
Kindergarten through 6 th	Bridle	24
Kindergarten through 6 th	Saddle	1
Kindergarten through 5 th	Victory	3
Kindergarten through 5 th	Woodbine	7
Kindergarten through 5 th	Pride	2
Kindergarten through 5 th	Dan Patch	4
Kindergarten through 5 th	Afton Love	7
5 th and 6 th	Tallau	14
Kindergarten through 5 th	Hanover	44

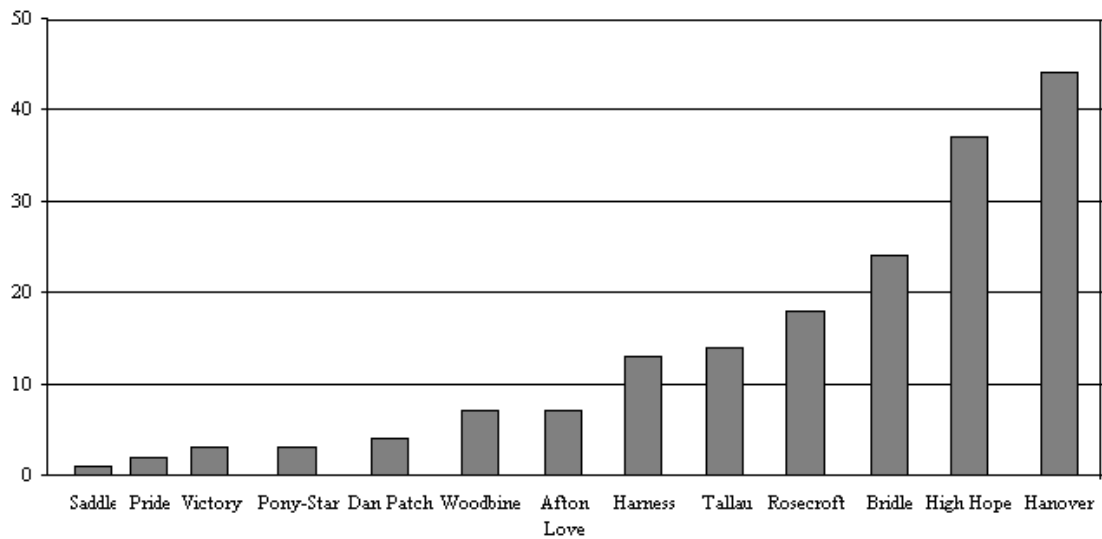


Figure 4.12 - Rank Order of Sample School Suspensions per 100 Students

The reporting of incidents of school crime are required by Title 14 of the Delaware Code §4112 and included in each school's annual profile. These crimes include violent felonies (Title 11, Delaware Code §4201(c)); Gun-Free School Offenses: including the possession of a handgun, rifle, shotgun, starter gun, or an explosive/incendiary device; weapons offenses: including destructive weapons, dangerous weapon, dangerous instrument, pellet guns, BB guns, knives, razors blade/box cutter, brass knuckles, a bat, a club, or a martial arts throwing star; drug offenses (Title 16, Delaware Code); Assault III offenses (Title 11, Delaware Code §611); unlawful sexual contact (Title 11, Delaware Code §767); offensive touching of an employee/volunteer (Title 11, Delaware Code §601); and terroristic threatening of an employee/volunteer (Title 11, Delaware Code §621).

Among the sample schools, 9 of the 13 schools are classified on the school crime indicator in the same high or low grouping as they are under the Delaware Department of Education Offenses. The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) offenses are different from incidents of school crime as they are required reporting under DDOE policy. These offenses include: pornography: possession and production; bomb threats; criminal mischief or vandalism; tampering with public records; alcohol possession or use; felony theft offenses; bullying; offensive touching of a student; terroristic threatening of a student; sexual harassment (Title 11, Delaware Code §763); fighting or disorderly conduct; possession of inhalants; and the possession of other drug paraphernalia.

Of the 6 sample schools “high” in the incidents of criminal offenses, 4 are also “high” in DDOE offenses. These schools are: High Hope Elementary School, Rosecroft Elementary School, Bridle Elementary School, and Woodbine Elementary School. Likewise, of the 7 “low” sample schools in criminal offenses, 5 were also “low” in DDOE offenses. However, please note that High Hope Elementary School, Rosecroft Elementary School, and Tallau Elementary School are schools that serve upper level elementary-aged students exclusively and therefore may bias the study’s findings. Given this difference, these 3 schools are highlighted in Figure 4.13 below as a reminder that they are of a dissimilar grade configuration when compared to the rest of the sample schools. As indicated within all school profiles, the following statement is offered below the reporting of such incidents:

The goal of the school climate and discipline program is to promote necessary components of a healthy school climate; to support learning and contribute to students’ health by minimizing distractions; physical,

psychological, and social hazards; creating a climate in which students and school staff do their best work; expecting that all students can succeed; and implementing supporting policies. This goal is accomplished by having in place collaborative relationships, an effective evaluation process, technical assistance and resources to ensure that schools are designed to provide a safe, healthy, and supportive environment that fosters learning.

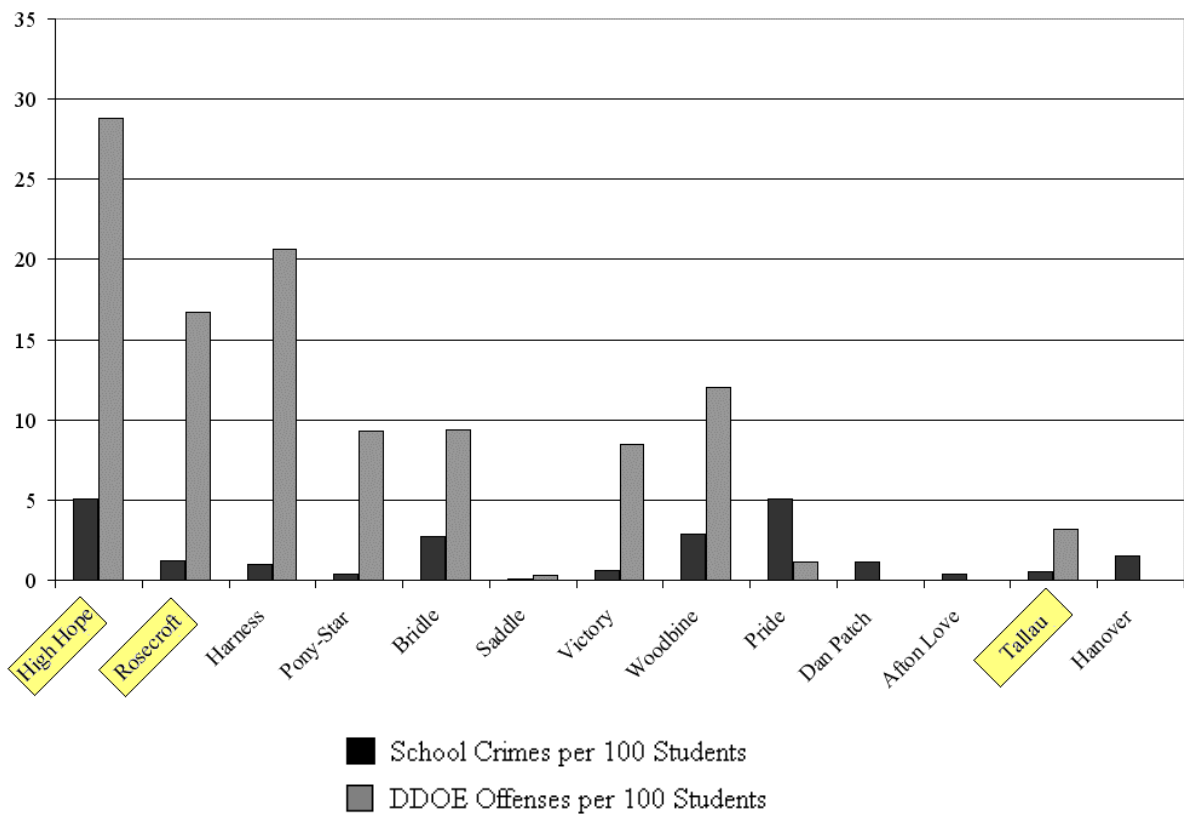


Figure 4.13 - School Crime and Department of Education Offenses per 100 Students

Perceptions of sample schools’ climates as reported by students, teachers/staff, and home were each measured on different scales (22-88, 23-92, and 24-96 respectively).

Figure 4.13 - Figure 4.15 depict respondent groups’ answers across sample schools. In all

three of these charts, the top and bottom 5 schools as ranked on the desirability characteristics summary of sample schools discussed above are identified. In Figure 4.14 - Figure 4.16, sample schools highlighted in blue are the top 5 ranked schools, while the schools highlighted in yellow are the low ranked sample schools. To further underscore the study's findings, the status of sample schools on various indicators when split by the sample schools' median are also indicated for comparative and informative purposes. Please note that in Figure 4.14, "high" desirability schools are also high ranked schools on student perceptions of school climate.

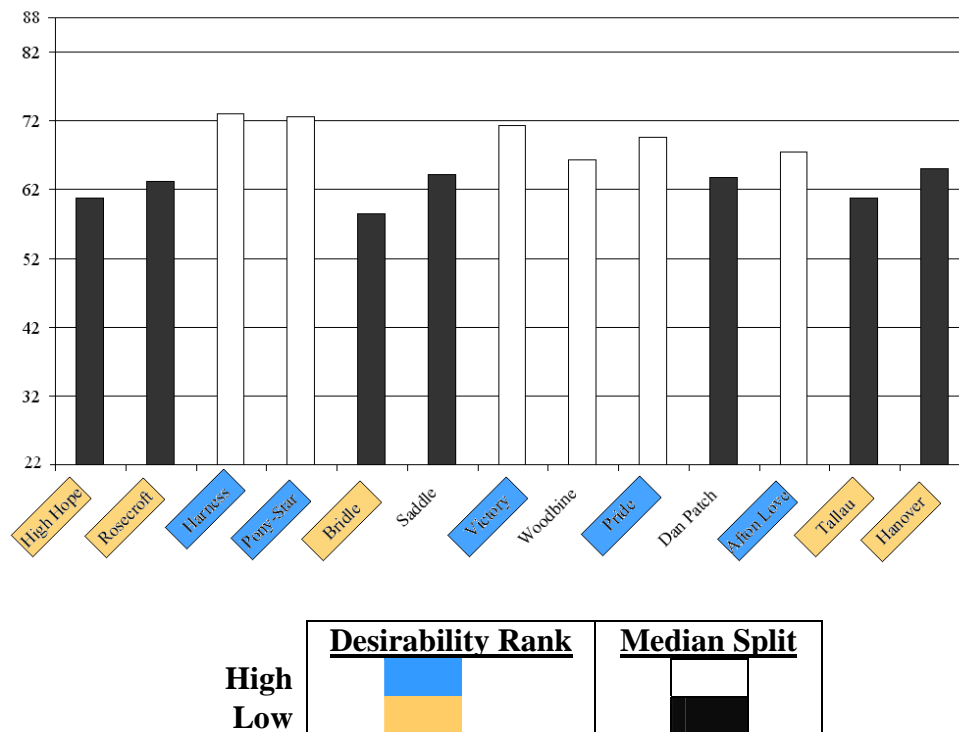


Figure 4.14 - Student Perceptions of School Climate

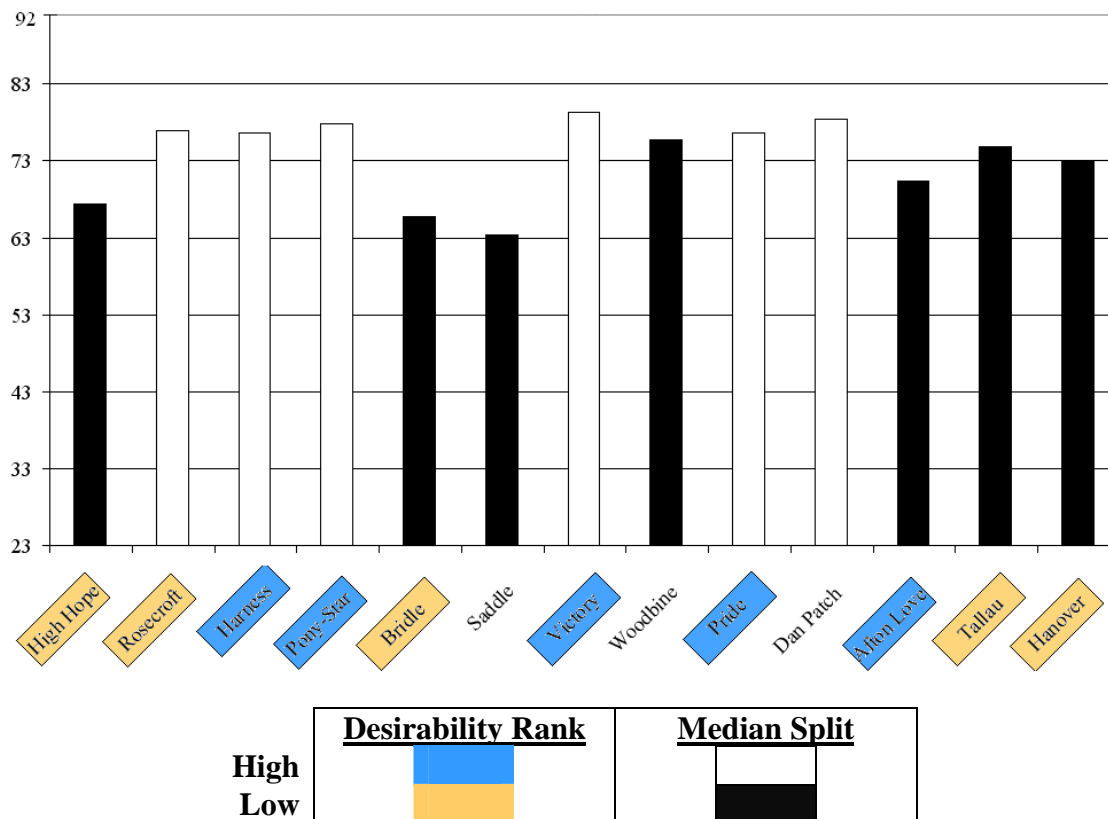


Figure 4.15 – Teacher and Staff Perceptions of School Climate

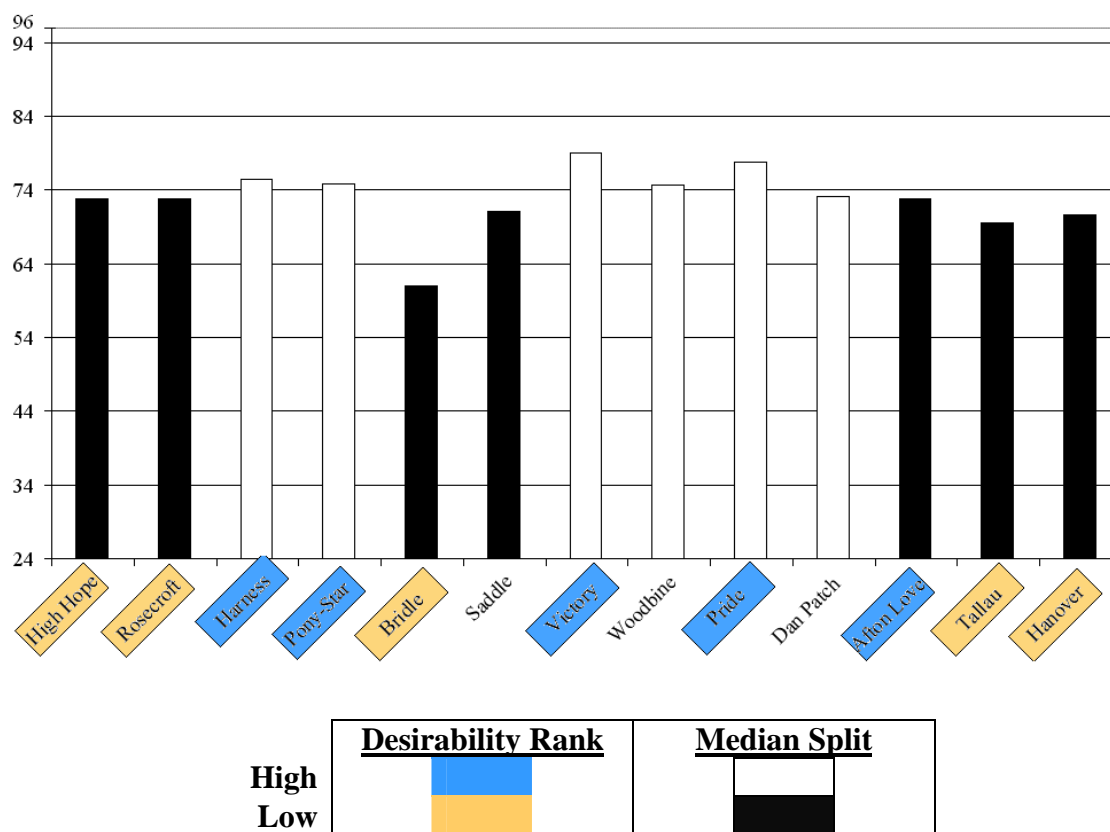


Figure 4.16 - Home Perceptions of School Climate

Figure 4.17 below is a depiction of all three of these respondent groups based upon each samples' mean item score then divided by 4 (since all 3 subscales had item level responses ranging from 1 to 4). Scores can range from a low of 1 to a high of 4 where a 1 indicates strong disagreement with positive survey items (and strong agreement with negative survey items). As indicated in the school climate survey interpretive guidelines, mean item scores help interpret if perceptions are favorable or unfavorable

regardless of across-school differences (Bear, 2006). Further detail on this interpretation method will be provided in the next section. Please note that in 9 of the 13 sample schools, teachers' perceptions were more favorable regarding their schools' climates than either students or parents/guardians.

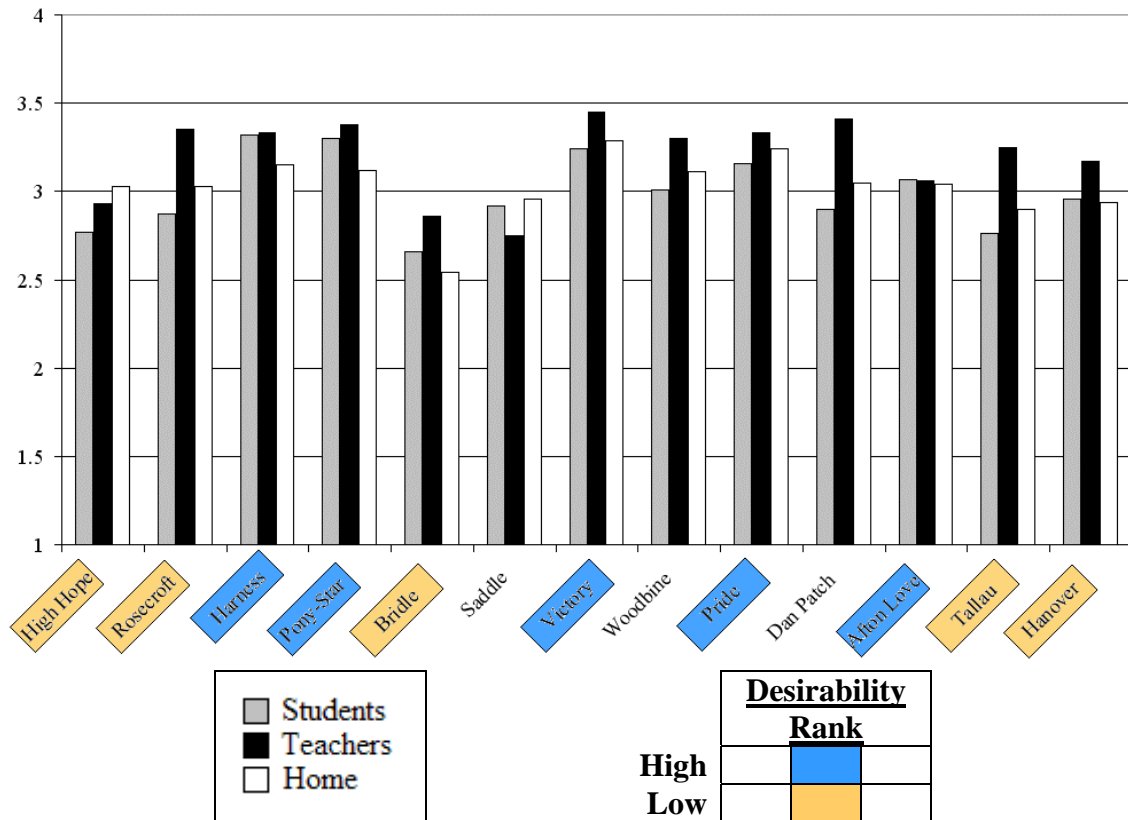


Figure 4.17 - Student, Teacher/Staff, and Home Perceptions of School Climate

As discussed previously, studies have found a relationship between school climate and the number of students in a school (Sprague and Walker, 2005). The sample schools' student body populations ranged from a high of approximately 1,100 pupils to a low of

just under 450 pupils. Research posits the more students in a school, the more likely undesirable events will occur. As Figure 4.18 below indicates, this relationship does not emerge within the current study, despite having variability in student populations across sample schools. High Hope Elementary School, a high enrollment school and a high DDOE offenses school, is an example of what is indicated in previous research. However, Saddle Elementary School is in complete contrast to this expected correlation given its high student enrollment but its low rate of DDOE offenses per 100 students. It is important to point out however that High Hope Elementary School is an intermediate school; serving 4th, 5th, and 6th grades, while Saddle Elementary School is configured to support students in kindergarten through the 6th grade. For the reader's ease, the 3 intermediate schools in the study's sample are marked with a star. Though depicted in Figure 4.18, the number of school crimes per 100 students was negligible rendering it difficult to draw information or offer an in-depth discussion.

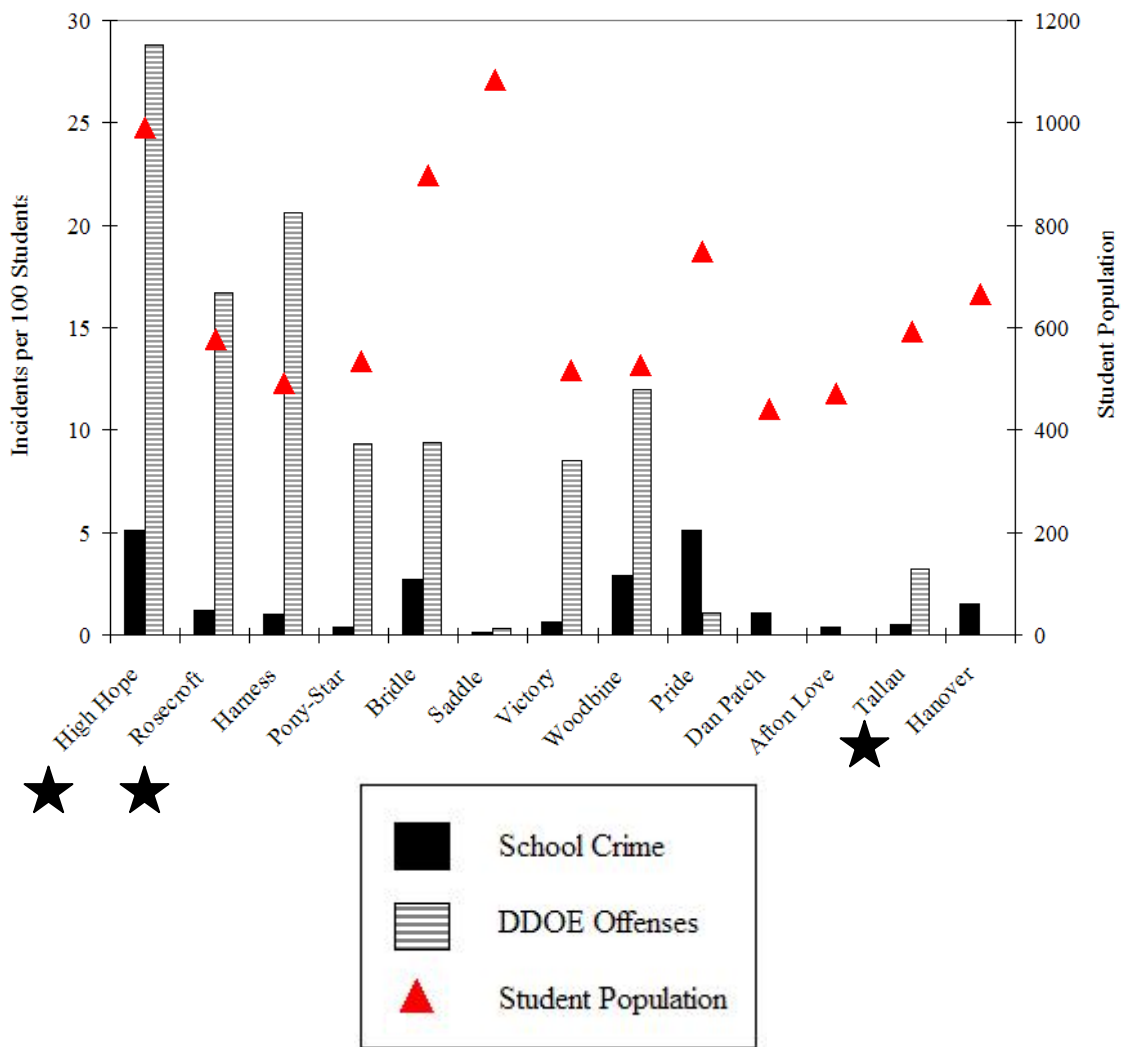


Figure 4.18 - School Crimes, DDOE Offenses, and Student Populations

The State of Delaware encourages a maximum student to teacher ratio of 15 to 1 (www.doe.k12.de.us). Most of the sample schools, as displayed in Figure 4.19 below, hover near this recommended ratio. Half of the schools exceeding the desired ratios are the intermediate-type elementary schools (i.e. High Hope Elementary School, Rosecroft

Elementary School, and Tallau Elementary School). The other half of the sample schools exceeding the recommended ratios are: Woodbine Elementary School, Dan Patch Elementary School, and Hanover Elementary School, each of which is a K-5 school.

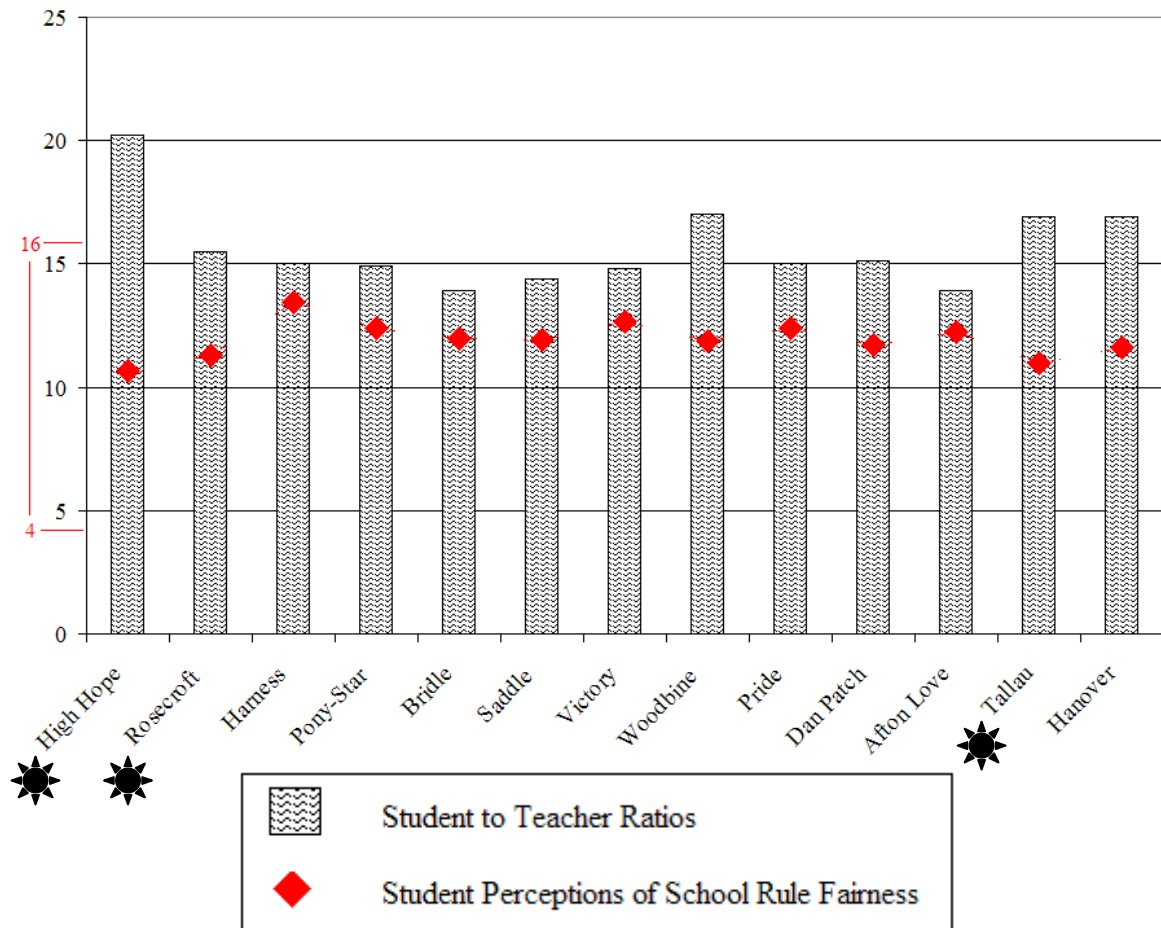


Figure 4.19 - Student to Teacher Ratios and Student Perceptions of School Rule Fairness

Interestingly, the sample schools with higher student/teacher ratios were all schools experiencing other concerning characteristics. For example, High Hope Elementary School and Tallau Elementary School both have high student populations, high numbers of suspensions per 100 students, low rates of students reporting that they feel safe in school, and high rates of students reporting that fighting is a problem in their school. Similarly, Rosecroft Elementary School and Woodbine Elementary School reflect high rates of school crime offenses, and low rates of students reporting that they feel safe in school. These observations are aligned with findings reported in previous research studies.

Teacher characteristics such as their education levels, experience, and ethnicity as well as staff turnover rates have also been linked to school climate and student outcomes (e.g. Bevans, et. al., 2007). Though the literature has indicated relationships between teachers' ethnicities and school climate, this relationship was not observed in the current study. However, there is little diversity among teachers' ethnicities in sample schools. As depicted in Figure 4.19 below, by and large, there are white teachers in sample schools.

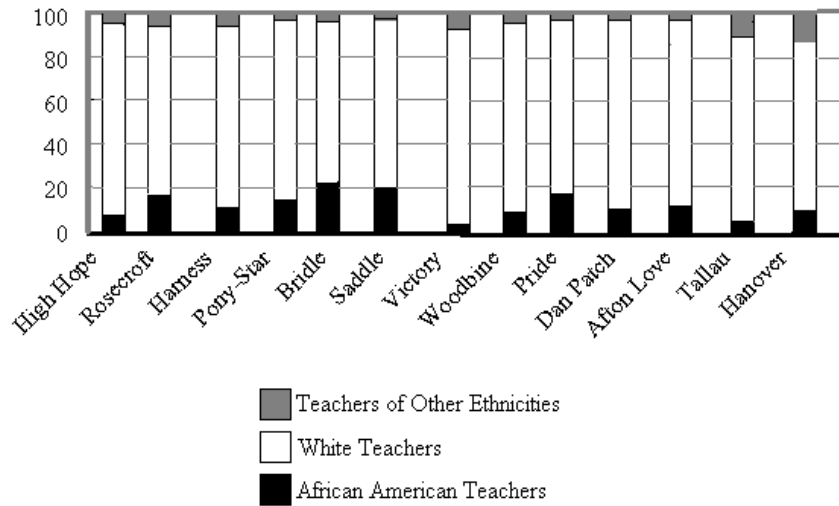


Figure 4.20 - Teachers Ethnicities

In the majority of cases (10 out of 13 sample schools), low rates of master's level teachers were associated with high rates of novice teaching staff. Given the nature of the education profession, one would anticipate masters level or above teachers among staff with more classroom experience, therefore rendering this observation logical. (Please refer to Figure 4.21 below).

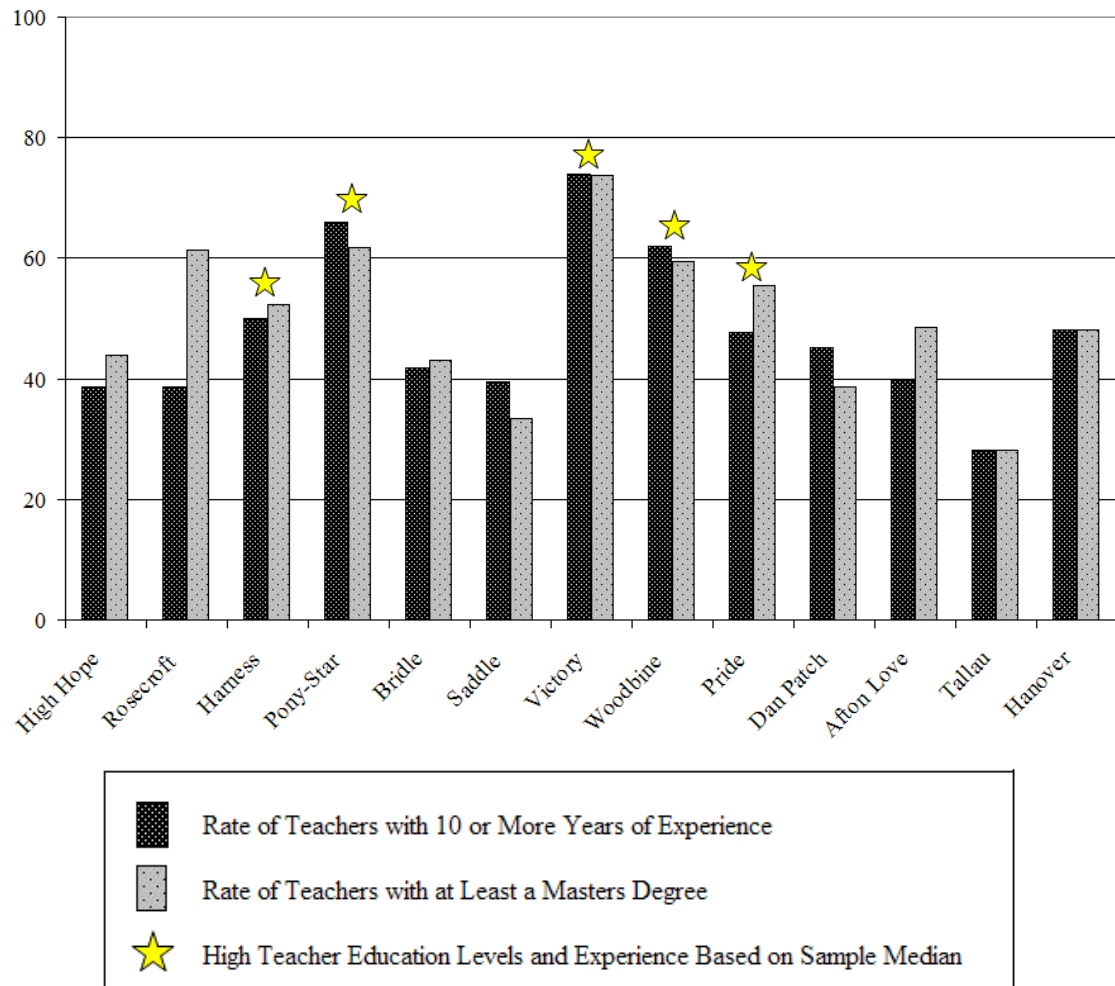


Figure 4.21 - Teachers with at Least a Master's Degree and 10 Years of Experience

Statistical Analyses of School Climate and Research Study Indicators

Interpretation of the school climate survey data is not as transparent or as straightforward as reports on the percentage of students partaking in or abstaining from the variables under exploration and discussed earlier in the chapter. The mean item scores used in the current study help to make comparisons regarding aspects of school climate among sample schools. The mean item score is calculated by summing item scores and then dividing by the number of items included in a scale (i.e. overall school climate) or subscales (e.g. fairness of rules or perceptions of school safety). Scores convey the degree to which the average respondents agreed or disagreed with survey items (Bear, 2006).

Three stakeholder groups' perceptions of school climate were explored in this research. Overall perceptions of school climate according to parents/guardians in sample schools consist of the following aspects of this phenomenon: Teacher Relations with Students and Home; Student Relations; Fairness of Rules; Liking of School; and School Problems. The Delaware School Climate Survey – Home version scores ranged from a possible low score of 24 to a high score of 96. To determine and assign sample schools as “favorable” or “unfavorable” in terms of school climate, scores of 60 or greater represent favorable school climates and less than 60 are viewed as unfavorable according to parent and guardian self-reported perceptions of their children’s schools’ climates. This score was derived by calculating a minimum average score of 2.5¹ on each item of the

¹ The use of a 2.5 is based upon instructions provided in Bear’s (2006) Guide to Delaware School Climate Surveys. “Mean item scores can range from 1-4, with a score of 1 indicating that all respondents strongly disagreed with positive items (and agreed with negative items) and a score of 4 indicating that all respondents strongly agreed with positive items (and disagree with negative items). Thus, this score is very helpful in interpreting if responses on a subscale are *favorable* or *unfavorable*, irrespective of comparisons

Delaware School Climate Survey – Home version in accord with the Delaware School Climate Survey interpretative guidelines (Bear, 2006). Encouragingly, all sample schools’ scores on the home version of this survey were equal to or above the deciding score of 60. Therefore, to distinguish sample schools appropriately, the median of sample school scores was used to dichotomize the population into “favorable” and “more favorable” schools according to parent respondents as opposed to favorable and unfavorable or positive and negative, as was originally planned.

The next stakeholder-group perceptions to be examined are teachers and school staff. The particular aspects of school climate covered by the Delaware School Climate Survey – Teacher-Staff version are: Teacher Relations with Students and Home; Student Relations; Fairness of Rules; Liking of School; and School Problems. The teacher/staff version of the Delaware School Climate Survey yields scores ranging from a possible low of 23 to a high of 92. To determine and assign sample schools as “favorable” or “unfavorable” school climates, scores of 57.5 or greater represent favorable school climates and less than 57.5 are viewed unfavorably according to parent and guardian self-reported perceptions of their children’s school climates. This score was calculated using a minimum average score of 2.5 on all items in the Delaware School Climate Survey – Teacher-Staff version in accord with the Delaware School Climate Survey interpretative guidelines (Bear, 2006). Encouragingly, all sample schools’ scores on the teacher-staff version of this survey were equal to or above the deciding score of 57.5. Therefore, to

across schools.” (p. 12). 2.5 is the mean of all possible answers (i.e. $1+2+3+4$) therefore providing a clear cut point between favorable and unfavorable scores.

distinguish sample schools appropriately, the median of school scores was used to dichotomize the population into “favorable” and “more favorable” school climates according to teachers and other school staff who responded to the survey.

The third and final stakeholder group explored is sample schools’ students. The examination of students in the study differs from home and teacher/staff perceptions in that specific aspects of this phenomenon were explored in addition to their overall perceptions of school climate. The specific aspects of school climate examined, which also make up the overall school climate score are: Teacher Relations with Students and Home; Student Relations; Fairness of Rules; Liking of School; and School Safety. In addition to these 5 subscales and overall school climate, the Use of Positive Techniques and Punitive Techniques/Misbehavior scales were also explored. The Delaware School Climate Survey – Student version scores ranged from a possible low score of 22 to a high score of 88. To determine and assign sample schools as “favorable” or “unfavorable,” scores equal to or greater than 55 represent favorable school climates and less than 55 represent unfavorable school climates according to self-reports of students. Again, this score was calculated using a minimum average score of 2.5 on the Delaware School Climate Survey – Student version in accord with the Delaware School Climate Survey interpretative guidelines previously discussed (Bear, 2006).

Encouragingly, all sample schools’ scores on the student version of this survey were equal to or above the deciding score of 55. Like the Home and Teacher-Staff surveys discussed above, to accurately describe sample schools, the median of sample school scores was used to dichotomize the population into “favorable” and “more

favorable” school climate schools (since, in fact, there were no “unfavorable” climates reported). Please refer to Table 4.7 below to view the sample schools’ groupings according to each of these three stakeholder groups.

Table 4.7 - Home, Teacher/Staff, and Student Perceptions of School Climate

School Name	Perceptions		
	Home	Teacher/Staff	Student
High Hope Elementary School	Favorable	Favorable	Favorable
Rosecroft Elementary School	Favorable	More Favorable	Favorable
Harness Elementary School	More Favorable	More Favorable	More Favorable
Pony-Star Elementary School	More Favorable	More Favorable	More Favorable
Bridle Elementary School	Favorable	Favorable	Favorable
Saddle Elementary School	Favorable	Favorable	Favorable
Victory Elementary School	More Favorable	More Favorable	More Favorable
Woodbine Elementary School	More Favorable	Favorable	More Favorable
Pride Elementary School	More Favorable	More Favorable	More Favorable
Dan Patch Elementary School	More Favorable	More Favorable	Favorable
Afton Love Elementary School	Favorable	Favorable	More Favorable
Tallau Elementary School	Favorable	Favorable	Favorable
Hanover Elementary School	Favorable	Favorable	Favorable

Table 4.7 above indicates the overall perceptions of school climate according to each of the stakeholder groups for each of the 13 sample schools. In 9 of the study’s 13 cases all three of the stakeholder groups’ perceptions are aligned in the same category, either above or below the median (please note that these 9 cases are bolded and highlighted in the above summary table for emphasis). Again, it is important to note that none of the stakeholders reported sample schools as having an “unfavorable” school climate. The absence of dismal conditions within sample schools is of significant

importance and highlights the opportunity for these elementary schools to become models of positive school climate in Delaware public schools.

As mentioned previously, the researcher opted to delve more deeply into the exploration of school climate as perceived by students through the examination of the subscales which comprise the overall school climate scores. The Delaware School Climate Survey – Student Liking of School subscale scores ranged from a possible low score of 4 to a high score of 16. To determine and assign sample schools as “favorable” or “unfavorable” in terms of school climate, scores of 10 or greater represent favorable school climates and less than 10 are unfavorable. This score was derived by calculating a minimum average score of 2.5 on this subscale’s items in accord with the Delaware School Climate Survey interpretative guidelines (Bear, 2006). Encouragingly, all sample schools’ scores on this subscale were above the deciding score of 10 with scores ranging from 10.5 to 13.76. Again the median score was used to appropriately distinguish sample schools as either “favorable” or “more favorable” according to student respondents with regard to their liking of school. Please refer to Figure 4.22 below to view the variability of scores among sample schools on this subscale.

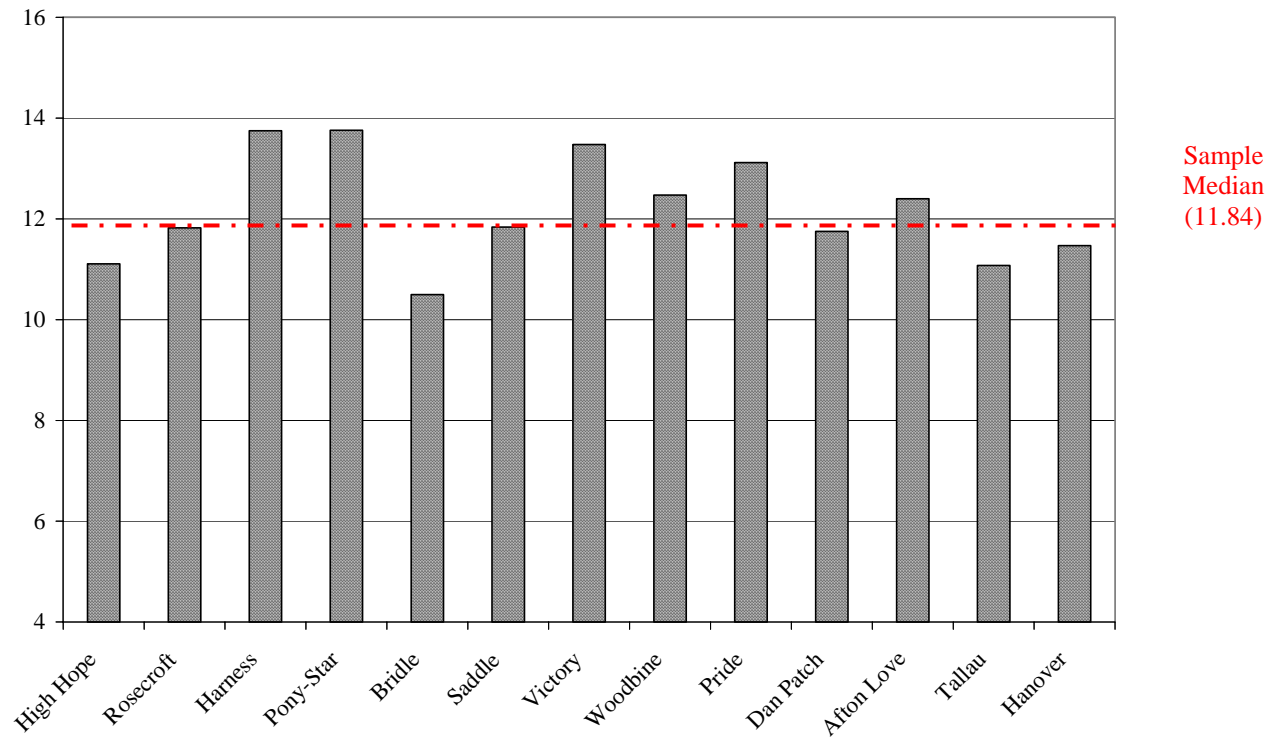


Figure 4.22 - Student Liking of School Subscale

Society’s heightened sense of awareness of school safety issues justifies taking the pulse of student perceptions of their welfare while in school. The Delaware School Climate Survey – Student School Safety subscale scores ranged from a possible low score of 3 to a high score of 12. To determine and assign sample schools with “favorable” or “unfavorable” school climates, scores of 7.5 or greater represent favorable school climates and less than 7.5 represent unfavorable school climates. This score was derived by calculating a minimum average score of 2.5 on this subscale’s items in accord with the Delaware School Climate Survey interpretative guidelines (Bear, 2006). Encouragingly,

only one sample school's score (Bridle Elementary School) on this subscale was below this decision point. Sample school scores ranged from 7 to 10.46 on this subscale. Again the median score was used to appropriately distinguish sample schools as either "favorable" or "more favorable" according to student respondents on the school safety subscale since only one sample school could be accurately classified as "unfavorable." For ease of discussion, this unique case was classified in the "favorable" category. (Please refer to Figure 4.23 below to view the variability of scores among sample schools on this subscale). Though individual perceptions are not the reality of the greater population, individual student perceptions of safety have many implications for overall school experiences. For example, students who feel unsafe may bring a weapon to school for protection thereby decreasing school safety/security for all – including students, teachers, administrators, staff, and any visitors to the school. Or, a small group of students feeling unsafe may be an indicator of those students being targets for negative behavior (e.g. bullying).

Further, as Welsh (2001) fittingly states,

[i]n the absence of strong school support for good behavior, and without effective discipline for bad behavior, students will reduce their risk of victimization through means of their own invention. Unfortunately the defensive strategies they adopt may only fuel a vicious circle whereby aggressive postures adopted for self defense convert all too easily to higher incidence of aggressive behavior, either through one's own desire to establish a reputation or through someone else's desire to establish a reputation at another person's expense. ...In that absence of effective control by teachers, teaching assistants, security staff, or administrators, student can, do, and will enact their own code of behavior (p. 940).

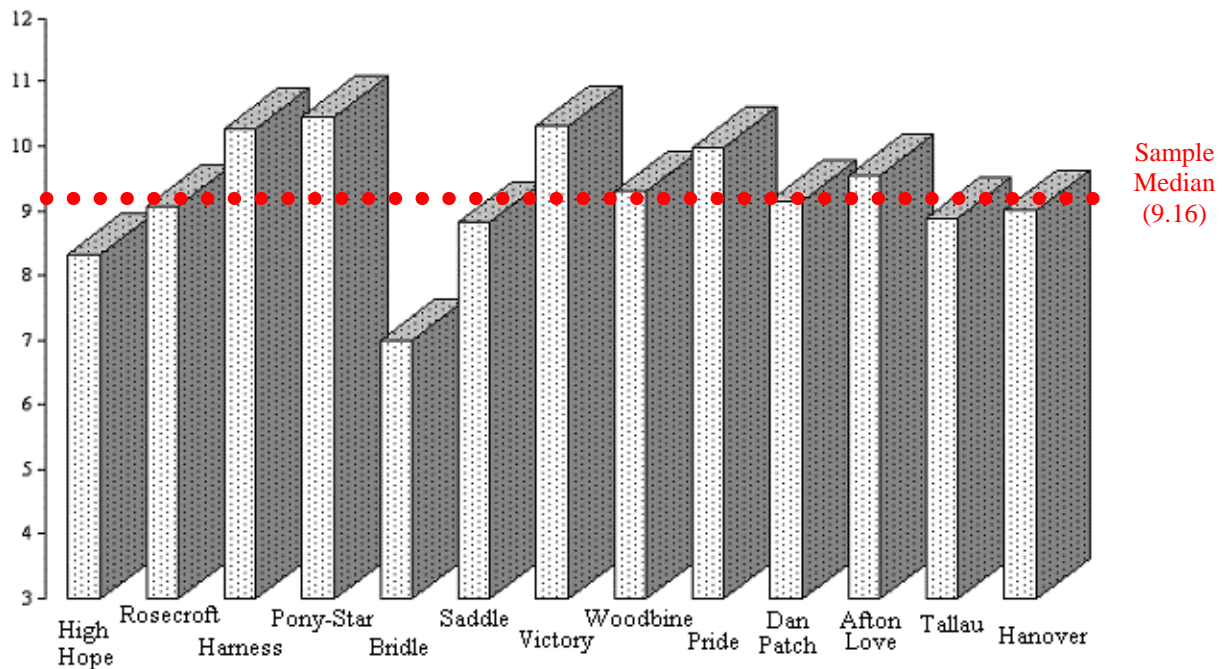


Figure 4.23 - Student School Safety Subscale

The importance of student/teacher relationships has also been stressed as an important aspect of student success (e.g. Epstein, 2002 and Bear, et. al., 2005). The Delaware School Climate Survey – Student/Teacher/Home Relations subscale scores ranged from a possible low score of 7 to a high score of 28. To determine and assign sample schools as “favorable” or “unfavorable” school climates, scores of 17.5 or greater represent favorable school climates and less than 17.5 are viewed as unfavorable according to students’ self-reported perceptions of their relationships with their teachers as well as their parents’ relationships with their teachers. This score was derived by calculating a minimum average score of 2.5 on subscale items in accord with the Delaware School Climate Survey interpretative guidelines (Bear, 2006). Encouragingly,

all sample schools' scores on the student-teacher-home relationships subscale were above the deciding score of 17.5 with actual sample school scores ranging from 20.5 to 24.96. Given these high scores, for the analysis of this subscale the median score was used to differentiate sample schools as either “favorable” or “more favorable” rather than favorable and unfavorable. Please refer to Figure 4.24 below to view the variability of student-teacher-home relationships subscale scores among sample schools.

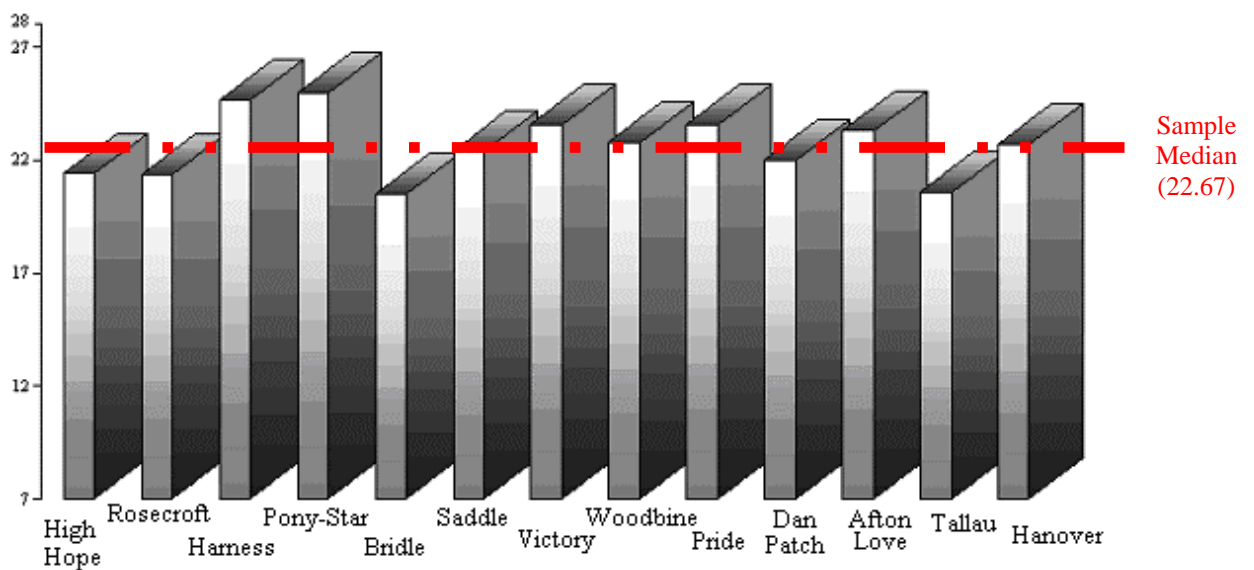


Figure 4.24 - Student Perceptions of Student-Teacher-Home Relationships

As depicted in Figure 4.25 below, “high” rated schools have greater rates of students reporting fairness of school rules when compared to “low” rate schools. As research has indicated, the more reasonable the rules and the more consistently they are enforced, the more effective behavioral strategies targeting student self-discipline will be

(Dunsenbury, et. al., 1997; and www.pbis.org). The Delaware School Climate Survey – Fairness of Rules subscale scores ranged from a possible low score of 7 to a high score of 28. To determine and assign sample schools as “favorable” or “unfavorable” school climates, scores of 17.5 or greater represent favorable school climates and less than 17.5 represent unfavorable school climates according to student self-reports. This score was derived by calculating a minimum average score of 2.5 on this subscale in accord with the Delaware School Climate Survey interpretative guidelines (Bear, 2006).

Encouragingly, all sample schools’ scores on the Fairness of Rules subscale were above the deciding score of 17.5 with actual scores ranging from 20.5 to 24.96. In the analysis of this subscale, the median score was used to differentiate sample schools into two groups “favorable” or “more favorable.”

The Delaware School Climate Survey – Student Relations subscale scores range from a possible low score of 4 to a high score of 16. To determine and assign sample schools as “favorable” or “unfavorable,” scores of 10 or greater represent favorable student relations and less than 10 represent unfavorable student relations according to students’ self-reported perceptions of relationships with their peers. This score was derived by calculating a minimum average score of 2.5 on this subscale’s items in accord with the Delaware School Climate Survey interpretative guidelines (Bear, 2006).

Encouragingly, all sample schools’ scores on this subscale were above the deciding score of 10 with actual sample school scores ranging from 10.65 to 13.42. Given these approving scores, in the analysis of this subscale, the median score was used to differentiate sample schools as either “favorable” or “more favorable.”

The Delaware School Climate Survey – Liking of School subscale score range from a possible low score of 4 to a high score of 16. To determine and assign sample schools as “favorable” or “unfavorable” school climates, scores of 10 or greater represent favorable school climates and less than 10 are viewed as unfavorable according to students’ self-reported perceptions of liking school. This score was derived by calculating a minimum average score of 2.5 on this subscale’s items in accord with the Delaware School Climate Survey interpretative guidelines (Bear, 2006). Encouragingly, all sample schools’ scores on the student liking of school subscale were above the deciding score of 10 with actual sample school scores ranging from 10.5 to 13.76. To differentiate sample schools on this subscale, the median score of 10 was used. Please refer to Table 4.25 below for a summary of students’ perceptions of their relationships with their peers, their liking of school, and their perceptions regarding the fairness of school rules.

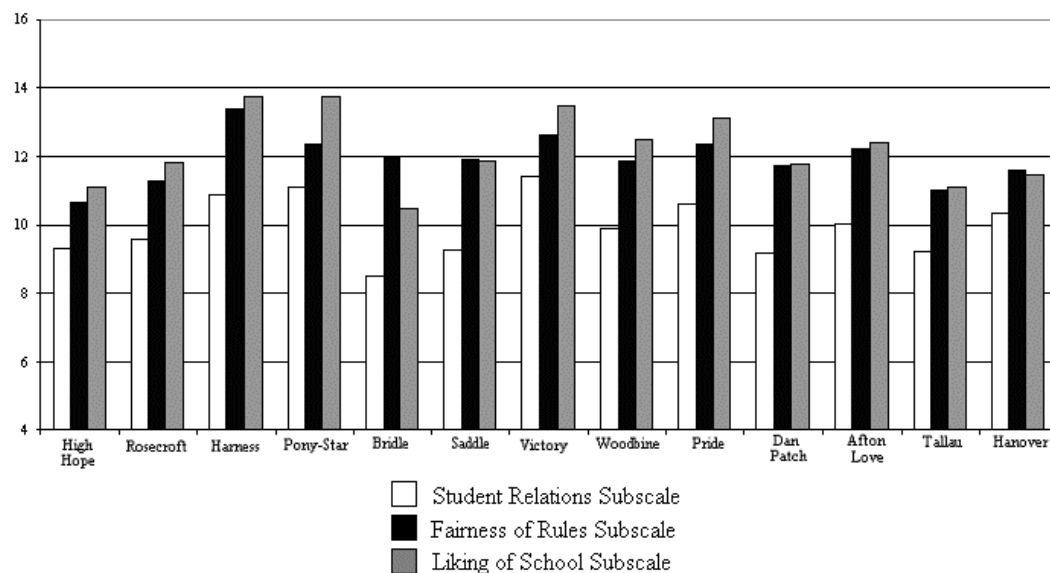


Figure 4.25 - Student Relations, Rule Fairness, and Liking of School Subscales

The high frequency use of positive disciplinary techniques as perceived by students does not automatically translate into low rates of punitive disciplinary techniques usage. The Delaware School Climate Survey – Use of Positive Discipline Techniques scale scores range from a possible low score of 3 to a high score of 12. Sample schools’ scores on the Use of Positive Disciplinary Techniques scale ranged from 6 to 8.86 with a median score of 7.65. The sample school scores on the Use of Positive Disciplinary Techniques scale were divided into 2 groups, “high use” and “low use” based upon the median score, resulting in 8 schools falling into the “low use” category and 5 falling into the “high use” category.

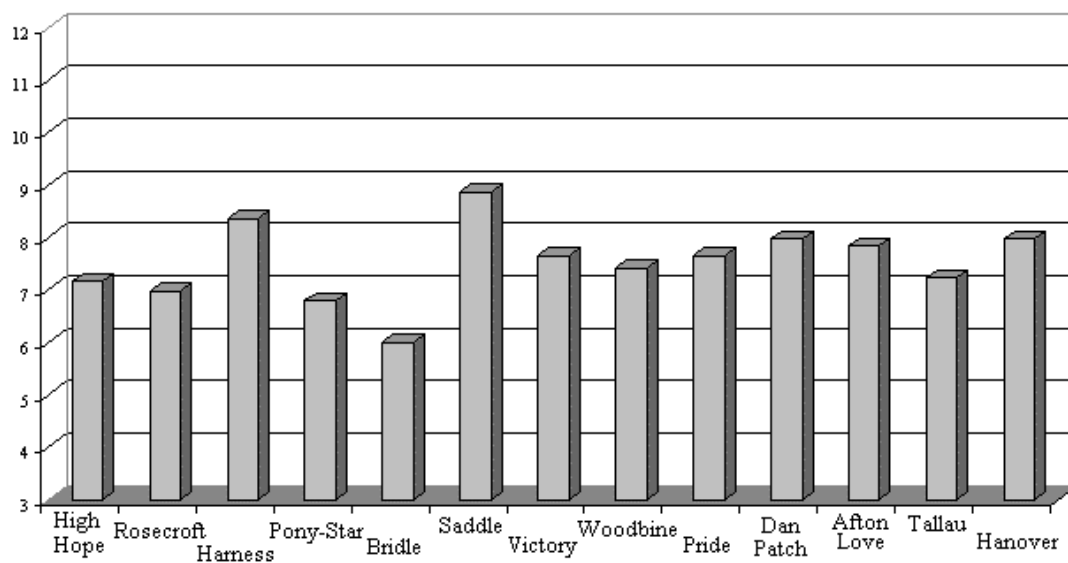


Figure 4.26 - Student Perceptions of the Use of Positive Discipline Techniques

In the case below, a high score represents a lower rate of students reporting the use of punitive disciplinary techniques when distinguished by using the sample schools’

median score. This is particularly important aspect to consider given what the research base indicates about the association between the use of punitive disciplinary approaches and student outcomes (e.g. Rickert, 2005). The Delaware School Climate Survey – Use of Punitive Techniques/Misbehavior scale scores range from a possible low score of 4 to a high score of 16. Actual sample school scores ranged from 6.51 to 9.49 with a median score of 7.57. In the analysis of this scale, the median score was used to differentiate sample schools into either the “high” or the “low” use of punitive discipline group. Please refer to Figure 4.27 below to view the variability of scores among sample schools on this scale.

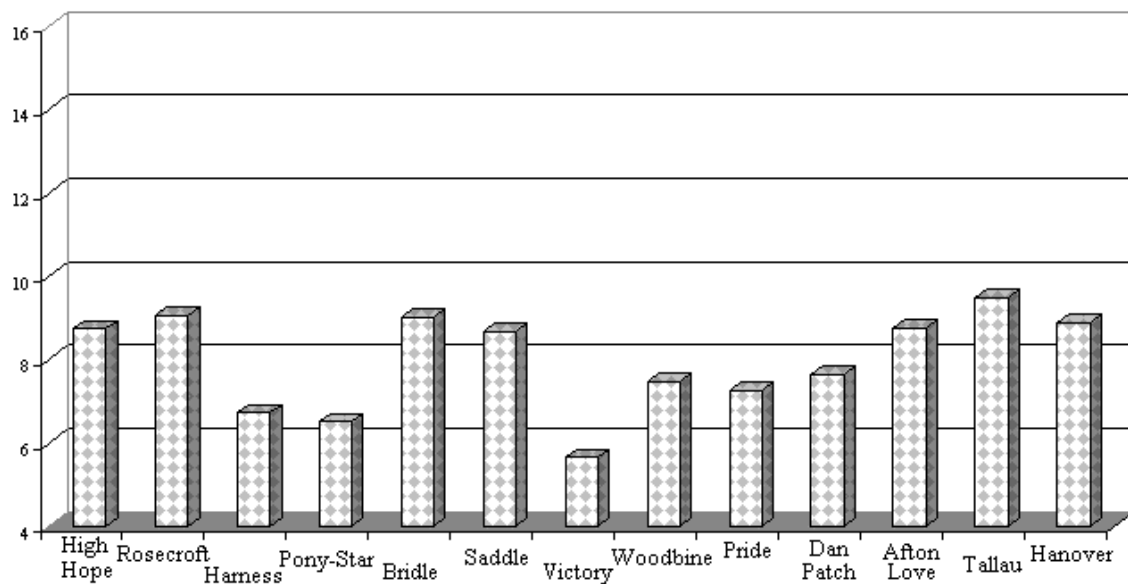


Figure 4.27 - Student Perceptions of the Use of Punitive Discipline Techniques

Though academic performance is not central to this research, it would be remiss not to address educational achievement. Further, the high-stakes accountability for

student testing brings the topic to the surface whenever any aspect of the education of children and youth in the United States is discussed, even when focused upon other aspects of our public education system, including school climate and student risk behavior. The academic performance variable in the current study indicates the average percentage of sample schools' students that met or exceeded state testing standards in all 5 content areas (please refer to the discussion in Chapter 3 for more detail regarding this particular indicator and its calculation). In sample schools, the majority of students (over 50%) met state standards in 2006. Please refer to Figure 4.28 below for sample school rates on the study's student academic performance indicator and achievement-based promotions among 5th graders within these schools.

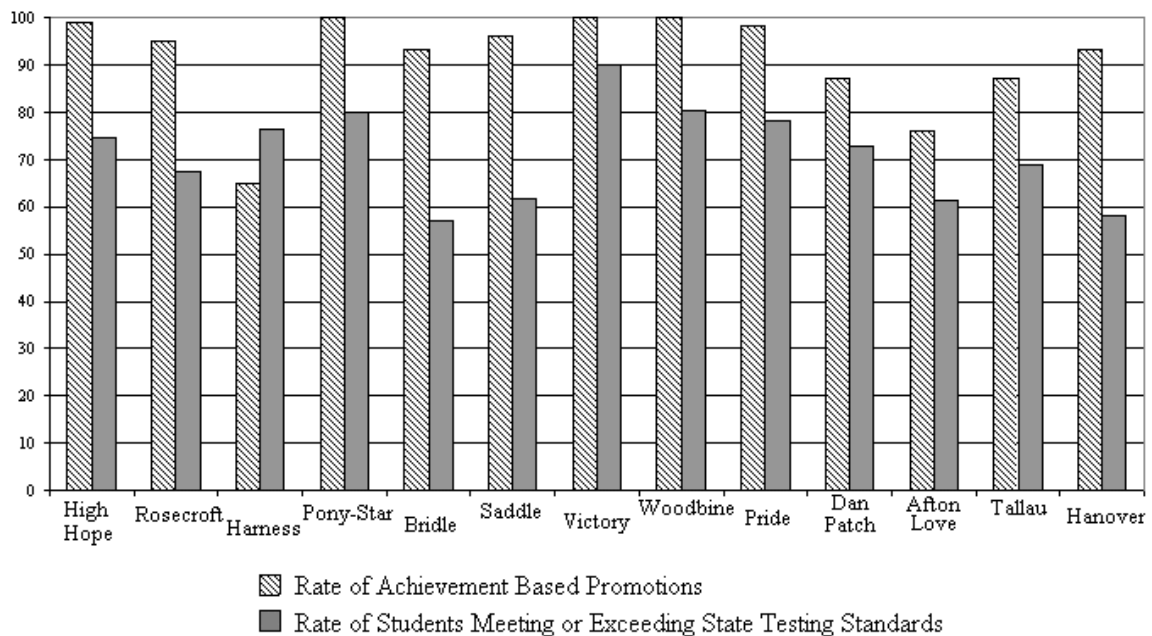


Figure 4.28 – 5th Grade Achievement-Based Promotions and Student Testing

Please note that in Figure 4.28 above, Harness Elementary School varies from the other 12 schools in the sample. In all but this one case, sample schools are promoting students at greater rates than the average rate of students meeting or exceeding state testing standards in the 5 content areas (i.e. reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies). Though it is atypical, in Harness Elementary School, the reported information indicates that even students who meet state testing standards are not being promoted to the next grade level based upon merit. There are a number of factors that may have contributed to this particular anomaly. First, the testing variable is a summation of all 5 content areas – 3 of which are based upon 5th grade students' performance (i.e. reading, writing, and mathematics), and 2 of which are based upon 4th grade students' performance (i.e. science and social studies). Second, testing outcomes are largely focused upon the results for language arts (i.e. reading and writing) and may be given more weight in grade promotion decisions. This explanation seems particularly reasonable given that approximately 86% of Harness Elementary School students met or exceeded reading standards, yet a mere 48% met or exceeded state writing standards.

Statistically Significant Correlations

A number of statistically significant correlations were observed between the perceptions of school climate and other study indicators. These correlations have been broadly categorized as follows:

- ***Student Safety*** and the association with perceptions of school climate:
 - Students' perceptions of school climate and feeling safe in school - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
 - Students' perceptions of school rule fairness and feeling safe in school - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
 - Students' reports of liking school and feeling safe in school - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
 - Students' perceptions of peer relations and feeling safe in school - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
 - Students' perceptions of student/teacher/home relations and feeling safe in school - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$); and
 - Students' perceptions punitive discipline and avoiding parts of the school - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$).
- ***Student Behaviors*** and the association with perceptions of school climate:
 - Students' perceptions of peer relations and student participation in gambling activities - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
 - Teachers' and school staffs' perceptions school climate and student participation in gambling activities - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$); and
 - Teachers' and school staffs' perceptions school climate and student abstention from substance use - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$).
- ***School Characteristics*** and the association with perceptions of school climate:
 - Students' perceptions of school climate and teacher education level - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
 - Students' perceptions of school rule fairness and student/teacher/home ratios - ($p = .005$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 9.551, p > .05$);
 - Students' reports of liking school and teacher education level - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
 - Students' perceptions of school safety and teacher education level - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
 - Students' perceptions of student/teacher/home relations and teacher education level - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
 - Students' perceptions punitive discipline and teacher classroom experience - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
 - Students' perceptions punitive discipline and suspension rates - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);

- Teachers' and school staffs' perceptions school climate and teacher education level - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$);
 - Homes' perceptions of school climate and teacher education level - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$);
 - Homes' perceptions of school climate and teacher classroom experience - ($p = .005$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 9.551$, $p > .05$); and
 - Homes' perceptions of school climate and teacher ethnicity - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$).
- ***Achievement*** and the association with perceptions of school climate:
 - Students' perceptions of school climate and performance on standardized tests - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$);
 - Students' reports of liking school and performance on standardized tests - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$);
 - Students' perceptions of school safety and performance on standardized tests - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$);
 - Students' perceptions of student/teacher relations and performance on standardized tests - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$); and
 - Homes' perceptions of school climate and performance on standardized tests - ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$).

Student Safety

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, all of the correlations observed and discussed below are among dichotomized variables; cross tabulations were completed using SPSS to run statistical computations. The Fisher's Exact test statistic results and the chi-squared test statistic are both reported to support the research findings. Student perceptions of school climate were the only perceptions among stakeholder groups examined to show a statistically significant correlation with the study's student safety indicators. Specifically, students' perceptions of overall school climate were positively correlated with student reports of feeling safe in their schools ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$). Please refer to Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8 Students' Overall Perceptions of School Climate and Self-Reports of Safety

	Sample Schools with a Low Rate of Students Reporting Feelings of Safety in School	Sample Schools with a High Rate of Students Reporting Feelings of Safety in School	Total
Sample Schools with Low Perceptions of School Climate as Reported by Students	6 (46.2%)	1 (7.7%)	7 (53.8%)
Sample Schools with High Perceptions of School Climate as Reported by Students	1 (7.7%)	5 (38.5%)	6 (46.2%)
Total	7 (53.8%)	6 (46.2%)	13 (100.0%)

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.198 (b)	1	.013		
Continuity Correction (a)	3.731	1	.053		
Likelihood Ratio	6.796	1	.009		
Fisher's Exact Test				.029	.025
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.721	1	.017		
N of Valid Cases	13				

(a) Computed only for a 2x2 table

(b) 4 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.77.

Students' perceptions of school rule fairness ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$); student reports of liking school ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$); student reported perceptions of peer relations ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$); and student reports of the relationships between students, teachers/staff, and home ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$) were also positively correlated with student reported feelings of safety in school. Finally, students' perceptions of the use of punitive discipline techniques and reports of avoiding parts of their schools to stay away from trouble were also positively correlated. Given that the use of punitive techniques subscale was reverse scored, high scores are more favorable (i.e. less use of punitive discipline techniques) than low scores. These findings indicate that the more often punitive discipline techniques are used, the less likely students are to report avoiding parts of school to stay away from trouble. Interestingly, this is a direct contradiction to what previous research has indicated. (Please refer to Table 4.9 below).

Table 4.9 Use of Punitive Discipline and Avoidance of School Trouble Areas

	Sample Schools with a Low Rate of Students Avoiding Parts of School to Stay Away from Trouble	Sample Schools with a High Rate of Students Avoiding Parts of School to Stay Away from Trouble	Total
Sample Schools with Low Use of Punitive Discipline Techniques	1 (7.7%)	5 (38.5%)	6 (46.2%)
Sample Schools with High Use of Punitive Discipline Techniques	6 (46.2%)	1 (7.7%)	7 (53.8%)
Total	7 (53.8%)	6 (46.2%)	13 (100.0%)

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.198 (b)	1	.013		
Continuity Correction (a)	3.731	1	.053		
Likelihood Ratio	6.796	1	.009		
Fisher's Exact Test				.029	.025
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.721	1	.017		
N of Valid Cases	13				

(a) Computed only for a 2x2 table

(b) 4 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.77.

Student Risk Behavior

Various data on student risk behaviors are available in Delaware; and the types of information collected are often overlapping. The DATOD asks questions about students' use of substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and other illicit drugs, as well as student-reported participation in gambling, and their use of seat belts and bicycle helmets. Some Delaware surveys ask questions related to students' sexual behaviors as well as domestic and/or dating violence. Though valuable, this information was not asked of 5th graders in 2006 on the DATOD survey, and therefore regrettably, could not be examined in the current study.

Among the questions on the DATOD, and selected for use in the current study, 2 different types of questions were asked – those related to substance use and those related to other types of risk behavior. One of the “other” types of risk behaviors was gambling, which was found to correlate with 2 of the study's school climate indicators. Participation in gambling among sample school students was found to be positively correlated with students' perceptions of peer relations as well as teachers' and school staffs' perceptions of school climate overall. Please refer to Figures 4.29 and 4.30 below for further detail on these statistically significant correlations.

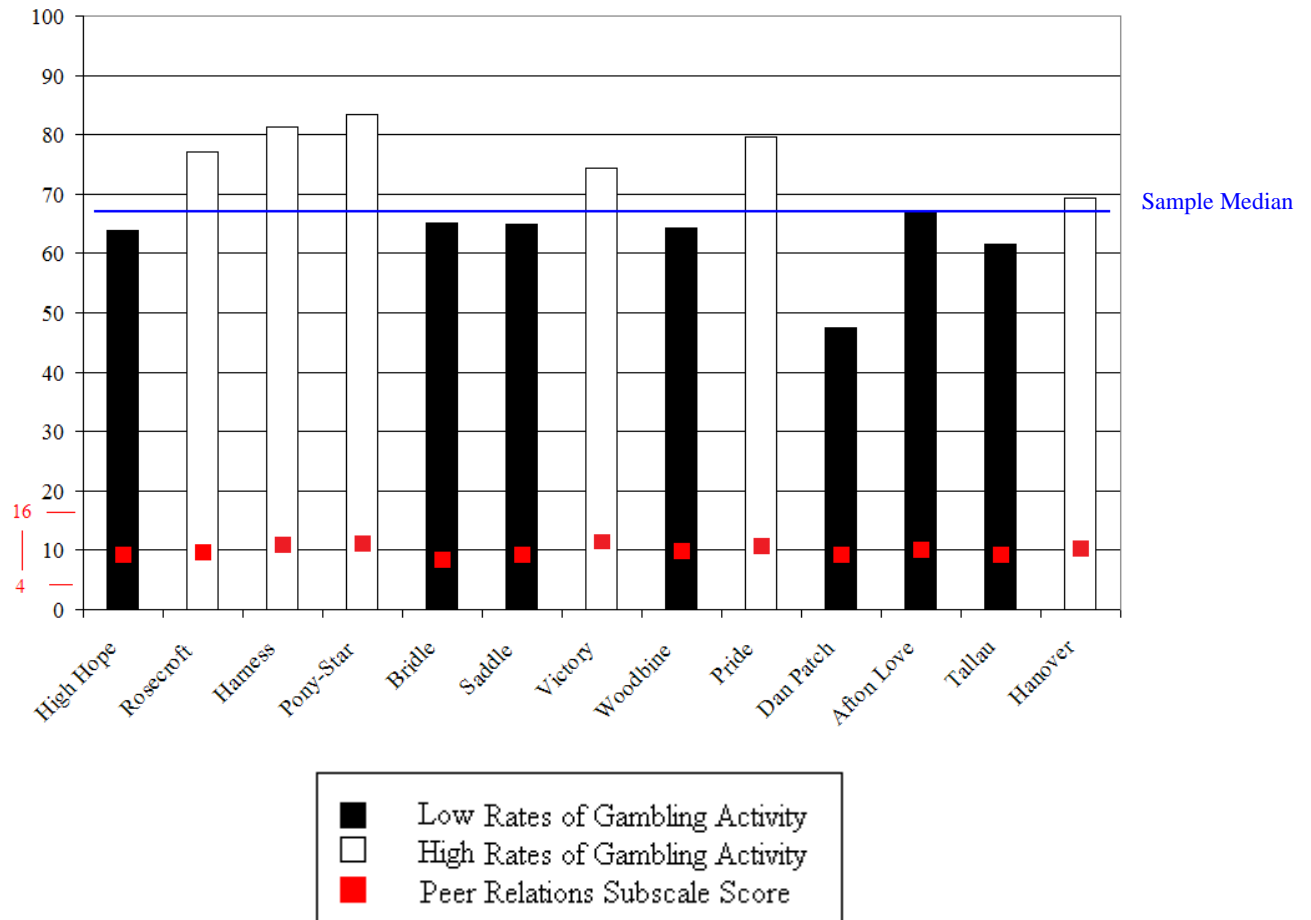


Figure 4.29 - Student Perceptions of Peer Relations and Self-Reported Gambling Activity

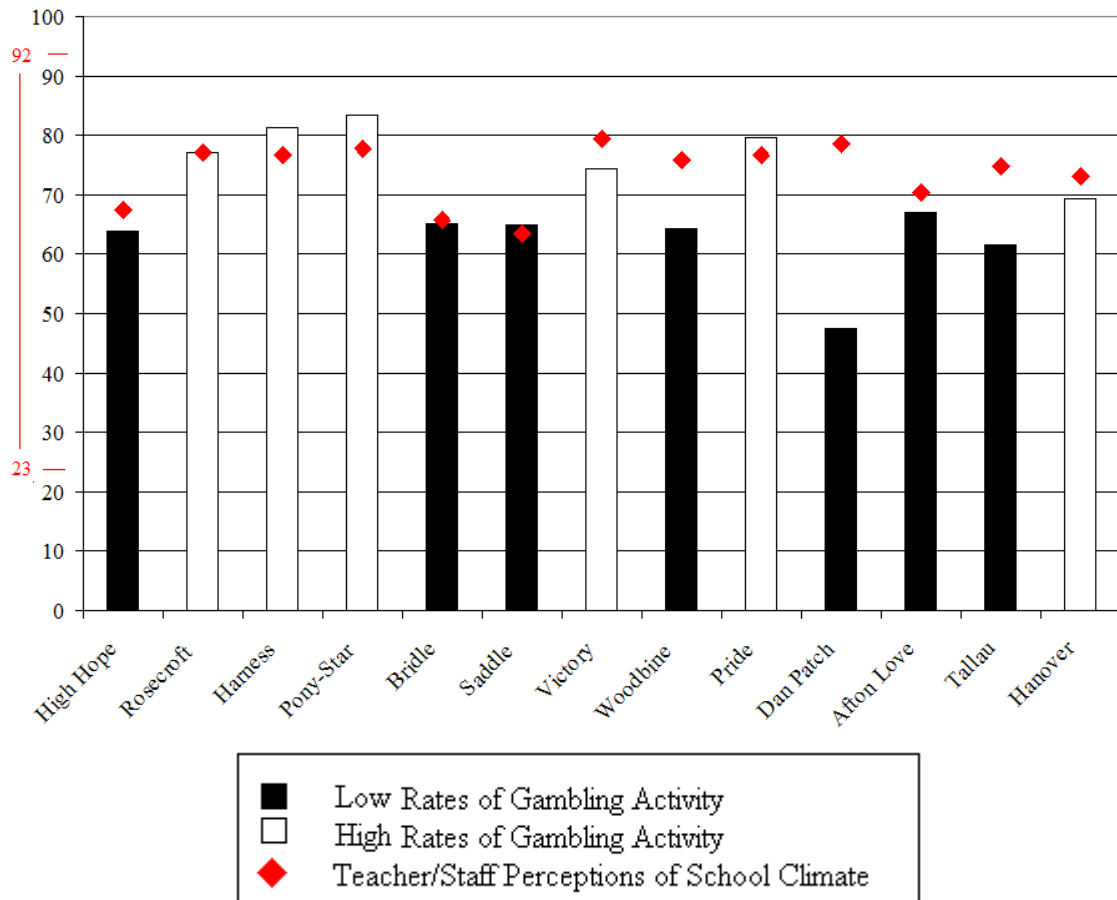


Figure 4.30 – Teacher and School Staffs’ Perceptions of School Climate and Student Reported Gambling Activity

As explained previously, risk behaviors surrounding the use of substances were examined in 5 categories – alcohol abstention, cigarette abstention, marijuana abstention, abstention from inhalants, and abstention from other substances. Interestingly, the only statistically significant correlation observed among sample schools on these indicators was between teachers’ and school staffs’ perceptions of school climate and student abstention from the use of “other substances.” A “low” rate of students on the study’s

abstention from other substances indicator is less desirable because of the way the original survey items were posed and then recoded for analytical purposes. Ultimately, responses were “never” tried the substances examined (i.e. cigars, clove cigarettes, tobacco products, uppers, downers, hallucinogens, and powdered cocaine) or have tried these substances. The observed correlation between the abstention from other substances and teacher/staff perceptions of school climate was positive (please see Table 4.10). Therefore, teachers and other school staff viewed their respective schools’ climates less favorably when the rate of students reporting to have never used other substances decreased. Conversely, as rates of substance use abstention increased, rates of teacher/staff perceptions of school climate also increased.

Table 4.10 Teachers' and School Staffs' Perceptions of School Climate and Student Reported Abstention from Other Substances

	Sample Schools with a Low Rate of Students Reporting Abstention from Other Substances	Sample Schools with a High Rate of Students Reporting Abstention from Other Substances	Total
Sample Schools with Low Perceptions of School Climate as Reported by Teachers/Staff	6 (46.2%)	1 (7.7%)	7 (53.8%)
Sample Schools with High Perceptions of School Climate as Reported by Teachers/Staff	1 (7.7%)	5 (38.5%)	6 (46.2%)
Total	7 (53.8%)	6 (46.2%)	13 (100.0%)

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.198 (b)	1	.013		
Continuity Correction (a)	3.731	1	.053		
Likelihood Ratio	6.796	1	.009		
Fisher's Exact Test				.029	.025
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.721	1	.017		
N of Valid Cases	13				

(a) Computed only for a 2x2 table

(b) 4 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.77.

School Characteristics

Student perceptions of school climate were significantly related when examined in relation to rates of teachers with a master's degree. Statistically significant correlations between high rates of teachers with a master's degree (or above) in sample schools were related to students' perceptions of:

- Overall school climate ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
- Liking of school ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$);
- School safety ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$); and
- Student-teacher-home relations² ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$).

Further, student-to-teacher ratios were significantly related to students' perceptions of the fairness of school rules ($p = .005$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 9.551, p > .005$). Interestingly however, contrary to what might be expected within sample schools, the higher the student/teacher ratios, the more favorable student perceptions of rule fairness were (Please see Table 4.12 below).

Student perceptions of the use of punitive approaches to discipline were correlated with the rate of teachers with 10 or more years of teaching experience ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$). These findings suggest that schools with high rates of teachers with at least 10 years of teaching experience are the sample schools where punitive disciplinary technique are utilized less frequently. For further information

² Please also see Table 4.11 below for further detail on this correlation.

regarding years of teaching experiences and the use of punitive discipline techniques/misbehavior in sample schools, please refer to Table 4.13 below.

Table 4.11 Student-Teacher-Home Relations and Teacher Education Levels

	Sample Schools with a Low Rate of Teachers with at Least a Masters Degree	Sample Schools with a High Rate of Teachers with at Least a Masters Degree	Total
Sample Schools with a Low Rate of Positive Teacher/Student Relations as Reported by Students	1 (7.7%)	5 (38.5%)	6 (46.2%)
Sample Schools with a High Rate of Positive Teacher/Student Relations as Reported by Students	6 (46.2%)	1 (7.7%)	7 (53.8%)
Total	7 (53.8%)	6 (46.2%)	13 (100.0%)

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.198 (b)	1	.013		
Continuity Correction (a)	3.731	1	.053		
Likelihood Ratio	6.796	1	.009		
Fisher's Exact Test				.029	.025
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.721	1	.017		
N of Valid Cases	13				

(a) Computed only for a 2x2 table

(b) 4 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.77.

Table 4.12 Student to Teacher Ratios and Students' Perceptions of School Rule Fairness

	Sample Schools with Low Student- to-Teachers Ratios	Sample Schools with High Student- to-Teachers Ratios	Total
Sample Schools with a Low Rate of Perceived Rule Fairness	1 (7.7%)	6 (46.2%)	7 (53.8%)
Sample Schools with a High Rate of Perceived Rule Fairness)	6 (46.2%)		6 (46.2%)
Total	7 (53.8%)	6 (46.2%)	13 (100.0%)

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.551 (b)	1	.002		
Continuity Correction (a)	6.413	1	.011		
Likelihood Ratio	12.203	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.005	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.816	1	.003		
N of Valid Cases	13				

(a) Computed only for a 2x2 table

(b) 4 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.77.

Table 4.13 Punitive Discipline Techniques and Classroom Teaching Experience

	Sample Schools with a Low Rate of Teachers with at Least 10 Years of Teaching Experience	Sample Schools with a High Rate of Teachers with at Least 10 Years of Teaching Experience	Total
Sample Schools with a Low Rate of Punitive Discipline Techniques Usage	1 (7.7%)	5 (38.5%)	6 (46.2%)
Sample Schools with a High Rate of Punitive Discipline Techniques Usage	6 (46.2%)	1 (7.7%)	7 (53.8%)
Total	7 (53.8%)	6 (46.2%)	13 (100.0%)

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.198 (b)	1	.013		
Continuity Correction (a)	3.731	1	.053		
Likelihood Ratio	6.796	1	.009		
Fisher's Exact Test				.029	.025
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.721	1	.017		
N of Valid Cases	13				

(a) Computed only for a 2x2 table

(b) 4 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.77.

As displayed in Table 4.14 below, an inverse correlation was observed between students' perceptions of the use of punitive approaches to discipline and the number of suspensions issued per 100 students in sample schools during the 2006 school year ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$).

Table 4.14 Use of Punitive Discipline Techniques and Suspensions per 100 Students

	Sample Schools with a Low Suspension Rate	Sample Schools with a High Suspension Rate	Total
Sample Schools with a High Use of Punitive Discipline Techniques as Reported by Students	6 (46.2%)	1 (7.7%)	7 (53.8%)
Sample Schools with a Low Use of Punitive Discipline Techniques as Reported by Students	1 (7.7%)	5 (38.5%)	6 (46.2%)
Total	7 (53.8%)	6 (46.2%)	13 (100.0%)

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.198 (b)	1	.013		
Continuity Correction (a)	3.731	1	.053		
Likelihood Ratio	6.796	1	.009		
Fisher's Exact Test				.029	.025
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.721	1	.017		
N of Valid Cases	13				

(a) Computed only for a 2x2 table

(b) 4 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.77.

Parent/guardian perceptions of school climate were positively correlated with teacher education levels. In fact, according to all 3 stakeholder groups from sample schools, as the rates of masters level teachers increased, so did the perceptions of overall school climate. Further, homes' perceptions of school climate and teacher classroom experience (i.e. 10 or more years of teaching experience) were also positively correlated. Homes' perceptions of school climate were greater when the rate of teachers with at least 10 years of teaching experience were also higher. Homes' perceptions of school climate were also positively correlated with high rates of white teachers within sample schools ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$).

Student Academic Achievement

Overall perceptions of school climate as reported by sample school students were significantly related to the rate of students meeting or exceeding state testing standards in the 5 (i.e. reading, mathematics, writing, science, and social studies) content areas ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$). The rate of students liking school was positively correlated with high rates of students meeting or exceeding state testing standards as well ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$). Furthermore, students' perceptions of school safety were positively correlated with the rate of students meeting or exceeding state testing standards ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$) as well as student perceptions of student/teacher/home relations ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198, p > .05$). These findings suggest that the more academically successful sample schools are those with more favorable school climates according to students. Furthermore, parents' and

guardians' perceptions of school climate were also positively correlated with the studies student academic achievement indicator ($p = .029$; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, $p > .05$). (Please note, each of the statistically significant findings will be discussed in the next chapter and are listed below in Table 4.15).

Table 4.15 – Statistically Significant Correlations among Study Variables

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Direction of the Correlation
Students' Perceptions	School is Safe	Positive
Students' Perceptions	Teacher Education Level	Positive
Students' Perceptions	Testing Performance	Positive
Students' Perceptions – Rule Fairness	School is Safe	Positive
Students' Perceptions – Rule Fairness	Student to Teacher Ratios	Negative
Students' Perceptions – Liking of School	School is Safe	Positive
Students' Perceptions – Liking of School	Teacher Education Level	Positive
Students' Perceptions – Liking of School	Testing Performance	Positive
Students' Perceptions – Use of Punitive Discipline	Avoid Parts of School	Negative
Students' Perceptions – Use of Punitive Discipline	Suspension Rates	Negative
Students' Perceptions – Use of Punitive Discipline	Teaching Experience	Negative
Students' Perceptions – Student Relations	School is Safe	Positive
Students' Perceptions – Student Relations	Gambling Abstention	Positive
Students' Perceptions – Student Safety	Teacher Education Level	Positive
Students' Perceptions – Student Safety	Testing Performance	Positive
Students' Perceptions – Student/Teacher Relations	School is Safe	Positive
Students' Perceptions – Student/Teacher Relations	Teacher Education Level	Positive
Students' Perceptions – Student/Teacher Relations	Testing Performance	Positive
Homes' Perceptions	Teaching Experience	Positive
Homes' Perceptions	Teacher Education Level	Positive
Homes' Perceptions	White Teachers	Positive
Homes' Perceptions	Testing Performance	Positive
Teachers'/School Staffs' Perceptions	Abstention from Substances	Positive
Teachers'/School Staffs' Perceptions	Abstention from Gambling	Positive
Teachers'/School Staffs' Perceptions	Teacher Education Level	Positive

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Though this research cannot provide definitive answers regarding school climate, it does offer lessons for future research in this arena. As indicated by Marx, Wooley, and Northrop (1998), “[s]cant information exists about the effects of policies, climate, and social relationships on educational achievement. Anecdotes and isolated investigations do not provide [a] sufficient basis for improving school environments” (p. 111). The need to reveal the true nature of these relationships is great and was the original intent of this research undertaking. The lack of school climate data at the high school and middle school levels severely restricted the analysis in this study. However, it is clear that we need to learn more about the relationship between policies, school climate, and students’ social, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual development; and it is through purposeful and systematic measurement, in the true spirit of continuous quality improvement that advances in this area will be made. Lessons of this study can help with making advances in measurement and quality improvement.

As was indicated in Chapter 4, certain sample schools consistently out-performed other sample schools. Understanding why such performance success occurs is essential in order to develop policies and recommendations that could enhance performance at all schools. The need to elevate attention to school climate is supported by the study’s findings and is discussed in greater detail throughout this chapter. The researcher anticipated statistically significant correlations among all of the study’s indicators; however, this was not the case. The research indicators have been consistently

categorized and discussed in terms of the study's 4 dependent variables: student safety, student risk behavior, general school characteristics, and academic performance; and the study's 2 independent variables: dimensions of school climate and approaches to discipline. Indicators from each of the 4 dependent groups were correlated with dimensions of school climate, suggesting that school climate is indeed a multifaceted phenomenon. The complexity of school climate was further explored through the use of qualitative research indicators and methods of analyses. This chapter will first discuss the results of the study's content analyses, and then address some of the expected, but unconfirmed correlations among selected indicators before shifting to focus upon the study's statistically significant correlations and the relevance of these findings to future study in this area.

The content analyses completed for this study did not provide the depth of information originally hoped for. However, 8 indicators were shared among the top 5 sample schools. It seems that within the sample population, more favorable school climate schools had low student to teacher ratios; favorable school climates as perceived by students; favorable student perceptions of relationships between themselves, teachers, and the home; favorable peer relations; high rates of student perceptions of school rule fairness; and high rates of students reporting favorable perceptions of school safety. The observed commonalities and differences between schools helped to partially answer the research questions. As Table 4.5 clearly demonstrates, the content analyses consisted of the desirability rating of sample school indicators and reviews of school mission statements and goals, school websites, and reports from www.greatschools.net. Based

upon a critical examination of Table 4.5, the following observations were made: all 5 of the high ranked schools on the desirability chart addressed student development in their mission statement and instruction in their goals, while 4 out of 5 sample schools that ranked high on the desirability chart addressed environment in their mission statement, and student development within their goals for the 2006 academic year. Therefore, among the high ranked schools on the desirability chart, all of the areas of focus within the content analyses were addressed either within sample schools' mission statements or within the goals indicated in their annual profile reports. A review of sample school websites, however, did not result in any consistent commonalities among high ranked schools (i.e. present in at least 4 of 5 schools). Among the high ranked schools on the desirability chart, GreatSchools' scores ranged from 3 to 8.

On the other end of the desirability rankings, much like the high ranked schools, 4 out of 5 low ranked sample schools addressed student development in their mission statement, and the school environment, communications, and student development within their goals for the 2006 academic year. A review of school websites did not result in any consistent commonalities among low ranked schools on the desirability chart (i.e. present in at least 4 schools). Within the low ranked schools, GreatSchools' scores ranged from 2 to 6. As previously noted, none of the bottom 5 schools on the desirability rating chart widely shared outcomes in terms of high/low groupings.

Through the examination of these content analyses alone, it appears that there are indeed differences between schools in terms of climate, though the distinguishing aspects

of less favorable climates are not as apparent as those of the more favorable school climates.

Given that the primary interest of the current study in student risk behaviors and school safety, expected but unconfirmed correlations with school climate and these two areas will be addressed next. Based upon previous research, correlations between rates of serious student infractions and school climate were expected. The data on such incidents were accessible via annual school profile reports and were generally categorized as “school crimes” or “DDOE offenses.” (Please refer back to pages 137 and 138 for the specific infractions included within each of these two groups). A negative, and statistically significant correlation was expected between school crime and overall perceptions of school climate (according to students, teachers/staff, and parents/guardians); as well as students’ perceptions of school safety. One would expect that sample schools with high crime rates (i.e. school crime incidents or DDOE offenses) would have less favorable school climates and fewer students reporting perceptions of safety in their schools. Given this anticipated correlation, incidents of offensive touching, disorderly conduct, and bullying were also examined in isolation (offensive touching, disorderly conduct, and bullying are all included in the DDOE offenses reporting group).

Though fighting is a specific type of offensive touching, this variable differs in the current study, as it was a DATOD survey question, not simply a number reported in sample schools’ annual profiles. Despite this difference in the nature of the original data information, a statistically significant correlation was not observed in this case either. One plausible explanation of the lack in statistically significant correlations between the

above variables and school climate, aside from truly non-correlations, is the actual number of these events within sample schools (which were all elementary schools). The school crime rates in sample schools only ranged from a low of .1 to a high of 5.1 per 100 students; while DDOE offenses ranged from 0 to 28.8 incidents per 100 students. Given that the rate of DDOE offenses varied among sample schools more than the school crimes, the lack of statistically significant correlations may also relate to the nature of crimes included within these 2 categories more so than the rate of incidents. The study might have found greater variability, and perhaps more correlations, if the sample had included middle schools and high schools where more such incidents take place. Unfortunately, adequate school climate data from such schools were not available.

Indicators falling into the study's "student risk behavior" category included: gambling; theft at school; trying exciting things despite the potential legal consequences; and the use of alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, inhalants, and other substances. Statistically significant correlations were not observed between school climate indicators and student reported rates of: theft at school; alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, or inhalant use; nor with engagement in thrilling behavior regardless of the potential legal ramifications. Gambling was the only statistically significant correlation.

As mentioned previously, each of these indicators were expected to correlate with school climate. The researcher anticipated a greater rate of students admitting to stealing things while attending school in sample schools with less favorable school climates. Likewise, the variable measuring student responses regarding engagement in thrill seeking activities was presumed to negatively correlate with perceptions of school

climate. Rates of student abstention from the use of marijuana, cigarettes, inhalants, and alcohol were expected to positively correlate in sample schools with more constructive environments. Despite the number of unconfirmed relationships, the study did yield some interesting and statistically significant correlations in addition to the patterns detected and discussed to this point.

Statistically Significant Correlations between Student Safety and School Climate

The rate of student responses to the DATOD item, “I feel safe in my school” was correlated with the following Delaware School Climate Survey scales/subscales: student perceptions of school climate, student perceptions of school rule fairness, student reports of liking school, student perceptions of relationships among their peers, as well as between themselves, their teachers, and their homes. Given that overall school climate, according to students, is a total scale score which encompasses rule fairness, liking of school, student relations with other students, and relationships between students, teachers, and the home, these last 4 correlations provide greater insight into the nature of a school’s climate and student reported feelings of safety while attending school. The 5th and final subscale comprising the overall school climate scale score is the school safety subscale. This indicator was also correlated with the item-level survey question “I feel safe in school.” This correlation, however, assists in the validation of the survey instruments used in the current research rather than providing deeper insight into the amalgams of school climate.

Based upon these findings, it is highly plausible that school climate and school safety are indeed related. Keeping students safe while in school may secure more enthusiastic and engaged students or these ideal students may contribute to the building of a positive school climate. As the literature has indicated, safe schools have healthier students and are better able to achieve their academic goals (Sprague and Walker, 2005). The need to uncover effective methods to building a positive school climate and a positive student body is indicated by these research findings and supported in the literature.

Aside from the clear interaction between students and schools, one other correlation was discovered. Among sample schools, students reporting less use of punitive disciplinary techniques in their schools were also the students reporting that they “stay away from certain parts of school to avoid trouble” at greater rates. Though a correlation between disciplinary techniques and avoidance of certain areas of the school was anticipated, the nature of this relationship was not. These findings suggest that schools relying on the use of punitive approaches to discipline are schools where students feel more comfortable throughout their school. Previous research indicates that clear and consistent, positive approaches to discipline, which honor the values of trust, fairness, and respect, are more likely to foster healthy school environments (Welsh, 2001; Perkins, 2006; Fleming, 1996). The freedom for students to venture to any part of their school at any time without fear is an important component of a healthy milieu. However, this finding suggests that the greater use of punitive discipline can help to achieve this objective.

Given that all sample schools are using the PBS model, if implemented with fidelity, the use of punitive discipline would be eliminated. As Arum (2003) suggested, the use of punitive discipline may widely eliminate unwelcome events, but these problems are still likely to emerge elsewhere in students' lives. The PBS model values the use of positive approaches to student discipline, as this model takes a preventative approach to assist students in healthy social, emotional, and behavioral development in order to enhance students' lives, regardless of their environmental context. Therefore, either more attention needs to be paid within sample schools throughout the models realization to ensure conformity and to better support desired program outcomes, or the basic nature of the PBS model may be unsound or underdeveloped.

PBS is supported as a promising practice within the field of student discipline (Sugai & Horner, 2006). A "promising practice" is rooted in a solid theoretical base, but has not yet been rigorously examined for outcomes (<http://www.amchp.org/policy/bestpractice-definition.htm>). On the other hand, "best practices" are those which are theoretically grounded and have proven effective through careful measurement/evaluation. Given that PBS is not a best practice - that is to say, PBS is not a confirmed source for effective student behavior interventions - it is reasonable to presume that beyond schools' lack of fidelity to the model, PBS itself may be a flawed model for enacting favorable school climates and positive social development among school-age students. Though this research is not intended to serve as a commentary on PBS, it is important to consider the interpretation of all of the current research findings within the context of the PBS model framework.

Statistically Significant Correlations between Student Risk Behavior and School

Climate

Few statistically significant correlations were found between student-reported engagement in specific risk behaviors and the aspects of school climate examined in the present study (perhaps in large part because risk behavior among elementary age students is less common than among older students). Gambling emerged as a significant concern given its prevalence among 5th graders in the sample (sample schools had an average of nearly 70% of students reporting their engagement in gambling behavior at some point in their lives). Beyond the prevalence of student reported participation in gambling, statistically significant correlations between gambling and student relations were observed as well as between gambling and teacher/staff perceptions of school climate. What is particularly interesting about the nature of these correlations is that student perceptions of more favorable peer relations were correlated with greater rates of engagement in gambling behavior. Likewise, high teacher/staff perceptions of school climate correlated with high rates of student reported gambling. In this first case, gambling may serve as a bonding mechanism among students in sample schools. Conversely, already connected student populations may seek participation in various group activities, one of which happens to be gambling. Teachers' and school staffs' perceptions of school climate may be more favorable in schools where students have more positive relationships. It may not be that teachers and school staff like students that gamble per se, but that teachers and staff generally feel more optimistic in schools where students are interconnected and collegial.

The only other student risk behavior examined that was found to have any correlation with the dimensions of school climate examined in the study, was between the use of “other substances” (e.g. powdered cocaine, uppers, and downers) and teacher/staff perceptions of school climates. The nature of this correlation was aligned with the researcher’s expectations. In sample schools with high rates of student abstention from substances, teacher and school staff perceptions of school climate overall were also high. This correlation was expected by reasoning that 5th graders who have used various illicit substances are more likely to rebel against societal expectations and therefore are more likely to be challenging as students. Though the nature of the actual interaction between substance abstention among students and teacher/staff perceptions of school climate can only be speculated at present, it is certain that the connection is greater than what this particular finding reflects in isolation.

Statistically Significant Correlations between School Characteristics and School

Climate

General school characteristics, which are beyond anyone’s control per se, did not appear to influence sample schools. For example, the rate of choice students, limited English proficiency students, and special education students were not found to interact with school climate. (Please refer back to Figure 4.2 and the depiction of these characteristics in sample schools). Other indicators classified in the study’s “school characteristics” group, however, were found to relate to school climate. Of particular noteworthiness, teacher education levels were correlated with:

- Students' perceptions of overall school climate;
- Students' reports of liking school;
- Students' perceptions of school safety;
- Students' perceptions of student-teacher-home relations;
- Teachers'/school staffs' perceptions of overall school climate; and
- Homes' perceptions of overall school climate.

All of the above observations were positive and statistically significant correlations - more favorable perceptions of school climate occurred in sample schools where more faculty members possessed advanced degrees. Particularly in this highly specialized field, one would expect more experienced teachers to be the teachers with higher degrees, which is the case among the current study's sample schools, yet fewer years of experience were correlated with more favorable perceptions of school climate as reported by parents and guardians. Please refer to Figure 5.1 below.

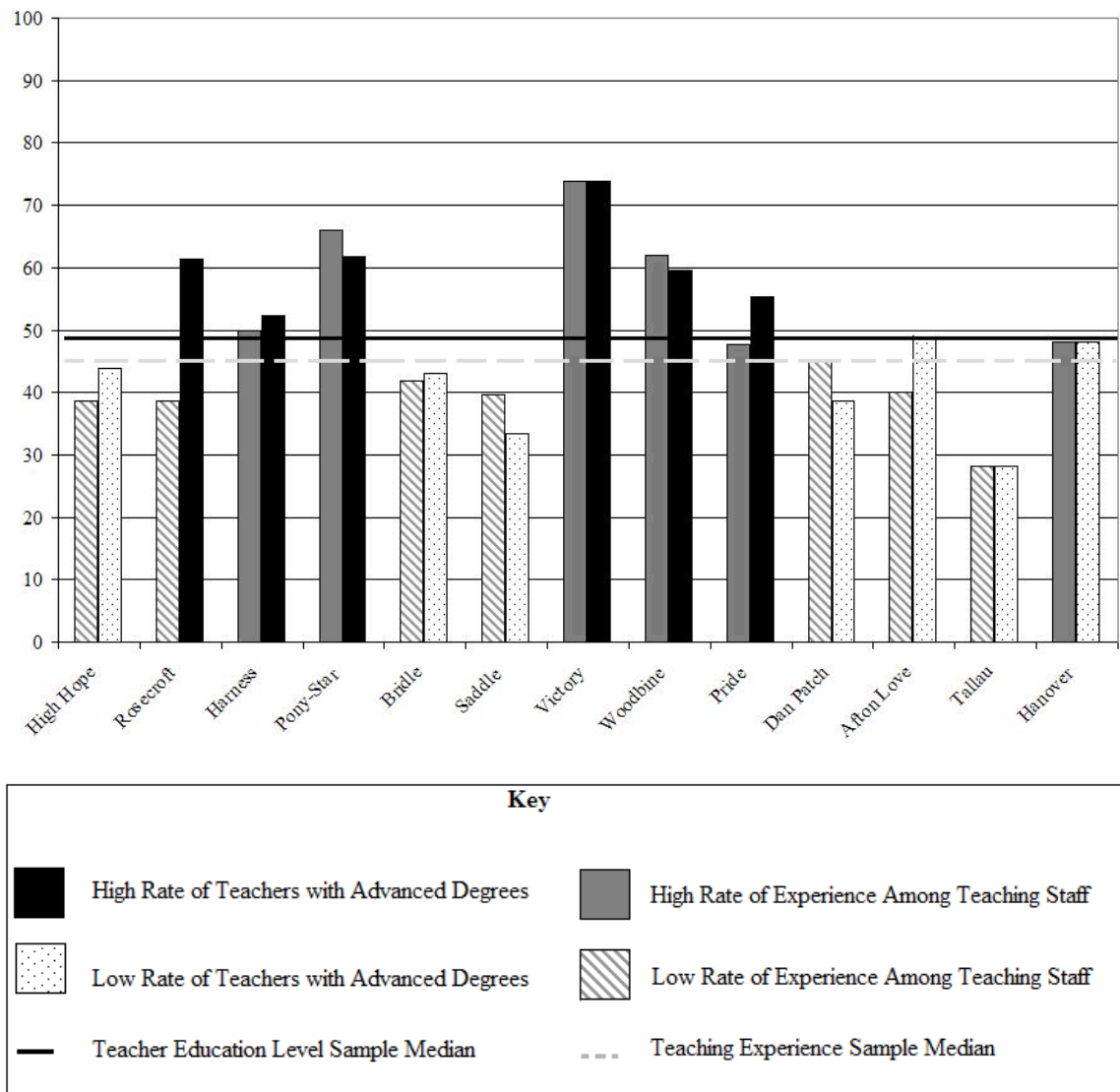


Figure 5.1 – Staff Teaching Experience and Education Levels within Samples Schools

Despite the confirmation of this expectation, a statistically significant, direct correlation between teachers' years of experience and homes' perceptions of school climate overall was observed. In this case the sample schools with higher rates of novice educators were the schools with more favorable school climates as reported by parents/guardians. Sample school students' perceptions of the use of punitive discipline techniques were also found to correlate with years of staff teaching experience. In this case, higher rates of novice teaching professionals in sample schools were also the schools where students reported more use of punitive disciplinary techniques. This latter finding is counter to what the researcher anticipated based upon a review of the relevant literature. Within schools in the current study, greater usage of punitive disciplinary techniques were associated with desired outcomes in terms of perceptions of school climate. In sample schools, higher rates of novice teachers were correlated with higher rates of reliance upon punitive techniques as well as higher rates of favorable perceptions of school climates, at least according to the parents and guardians of sample school students.

Finally, student perceptions of the use of punitive discipline techniques were negatively correlated with suspension rates; students perceptions of rule fairness were negatively correlated with student-to-teacher ratios; and homes' perceptions of school climate and the rate of white teachers within sample schools were positively correlated. In this latter case, as depicted previously in Figure 4.19, diversity of teaching staff in terms of ethnicity within sample schools is rather low. The nature of the correlation between punitive discipline and suspension rates was unexpected and the nature of the correlation between student perceptions of rule fairness and student-to-teacher ratios was

anticipated. Within sample schools, less reliance upon punitive disciplinary techniques was associated with high suspension rates. This relationship was unforeseen given that suspensions are typically considered a punitive approach to discipline. However, punitive techniques are not draconian approaches to discipline per se, and perhaps as long as suspensions are administered in a fair and consistent manner they are not perceived as “punitive” among students in sample schools.

As previously mentioned, the character of the relationship between student perceptions of rule fairness and student-to-teacher ratios was anticipated. It seems reasonable that acts of favoritism might be more easily identified in schools with lower student-to-teacher ratios. In this vein, it seems likely, regardless of the nature of the relationships, that teachers and school staff are better able to familiarize themselves with their students when student-to-teacher ratios are low.

Statistically Significant Correlations between Student Academic Achievement and School Climate

The final category explored in this study and to be discussed is that of student academic achievement on state standardized tests. The nature of the correlations between the rate of students meeting or exceeding state testing standards in the 5 content areas and indicators of school climate were expected, though there were fewer relationships confirmed than were initially anticipated. Academic achievement in sample schools was correlated with: students’ perceptions of school climate; student reports of liking school;

students' perceptions of school safety; students' perceptions of student/teacher/home relations; and homes' perceptions of school climate.

A Major Research Confound: The Grade Structures of Sample Schools

The small sample size (n=13) is certainly a cause for caution in the interpretation of the current study's findings. Perhaps adding even more complexity to the interpretation of the research findings is the variation of school grade structures within the sample, as well as the absence of middle schools and high schools in the sample due to lack of data. As mentioned throughout this dissertation, 3 of the 13 sample schools catered to upper-elementary aged students exclusively (i.e. 4th, 5th, and 6th graders); whereas the remaining 10 schools were kindergarten through 5th or 6th grade serving schools. In an effort to minimize this major confound, the 3 intermediate-level elementary schools were removed from the dataset, the median score was recalculated for each research variable using only the scores from the 10 remaining schools, and statistical analyses were recomputed. A total of 9 statistically significant correlations were observed that were also observed when the intermediate-level elementary schools were included in the analyses.

It is reasonable to anticipate that the 3 intermediate schools would impact the outcomes of the study, therefore justifying a deeper investigation of these data. Table 5.1 below lists the 9 statistically significant correlations that were observed when the intermediate-level elementary schools were included and excluded from the data analyses (please note one of these correlations was between the Delaware School Climate Survey

Student Perceptions of School Safety Subscale and the DATOD item level question regarding student safety and is not listed in Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 – Research Findings and School Structure Variability: Consistently Significant Statistical Correlations

Correlation	Significance n = 13	Significance n = 10
School rule fairness X Feeling safe in school	p = .029; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, p > .05	p = .008; $X^2(1, N = 10) = 10.00$, p > .05
Peer relations X Student gambling activities	p = .029; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, p > .05	p = .008; $X^2(1, N = 10) = 10.00$, p > .05
Student/teacher/home relations X Feeling safe in school	p = .029; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, p > .05	p = .008; $X^2(1, N = 10) = 10.00$, p > .05
Homes' perceptions of school climate X Standardized test performance	p = .029; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, p > .05	p = .008; $X^2(1, N = 10) = 10.00$, p > .05
Liking school X Teacher education level	p = .029; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, p > .05	p = .008; $X^2(1, N = 10) = 10.00$, p > .05
Liking school X Standardized test performance	p = .029; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, p > .05	p = .008; $X^2(1, N = 10) = 10.00$, p > .05
Homes' perceptions of school climate X Teacher education level	p = .029; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, p > .05	p = .008; $X^2(1, N = 10) = 10.00$, p > .05
Students' perceptions of school climate X Feeling safe in school	p = .029; $X^2(1, N = 13) = 6.198$, p > .05	p = .008; $X^2(1, N = 10) = 10.00$, p > .05

These 8 correlations listed in Table 5.1 above are important as it appears that school grade structure does not influence the relationships among these indicators. However, it is important to note that new statistically significant correlations were

observed when analyses were run for the reduced sample ($n = 10$). The new correlations within sample schools included:

- Higher rates of homes' perceptions of school climate in schools where rates of reporting that fighting was problematic were low;
- Higher rates of homes' perceptions of school climate in schools where low income student rates were low;
- Higher rates of homes' perceptions of school climate in schools where school performance ratings were high (i.e. "Superior");
- Higher rates of students reporting that they like schools in schools where fighting was less problematic;
- Higher rates of students reporting that they like schools in schools where low income student rates were low;
- Higher rates of students' perceptions of student/school/home relations where fighting was less problematic;
- Higher rates of students' perceptions of student/school/home relations where rates of low income students were low;
- Higher rates of students reporting that they feel safe in schools where fighting was less problematic;
- Higher rates of students reporting that they feel safe in schools where the low income student population rates were low;
- Higher rates of students reporting that they perceived more favorable peer relations in schools where fighting was less problematic;

- Higher rates of students reporting that they perceived more favorable peer relations in schools where the low income student population rates were low;
- Higher rates of teachers and other school staff reporting favorable perceptions of school climate overall and low rates of students of “other ethnicities;” and
- Higher rates of students reporting the use of positive disciplinary techniques in schools where students’ reports of feeling safe in school were low.

Implications of the Research

The need to reveal the intricacies of establishing a constructive school climate and nurturing positive student outcomes remains. Once specifications of this interaction are better understood, policy initiatives can be enacted to better develop healthy environments in all schools. This sentiment is echoed in McCabe and Cohen’s (2006) summary report of their state-level school climate policy scan. “In theory, research shapes policy, which in turn dictates school improvement practice. In practice, this relationship is often more complicated and rarely so logical. In fact ... there is a significant gap between school climate research ... and State Department of Education school climate related policy” (p. 1).

Schools must begin to close this pronounced gap. Specific steps which can be taken to improve the current situation are to (1) clearly articulate the concept of school climate and how it is best measured; (2) hold schools accountable for their environment once conceptualized and schools are enabled to measure changes; and (3) incorporate school climate related policies into mainstream policies addressing school accountability

and student academic achievement to ensure their due attention (McCabe and Cohen, 2006).

There are many important lessons that were gathered throughout this research undertaking. The following observations and suggestions may prove helpful to future research endeavors. Steps must be taken at the outset of conducting research to clearly articulate any concepts to be measured, to ensure a sound methodological design, and to obtain a random and representative sample. The operationalization of school climate is complex and highly challenging, however, strides to refine our understanding of this phenomenon must continue. An enhanced research design would increase internal validity and thereby allow for the generalization of information. Finally, the current study was drastically limited by the availability of school climate data.

A diverse sample, in terms of school types (e.g. middle school, high school, and alternative school) would be advantageous. The current study had little variance within the sample population. The availability of a complete dataset on school climate in Delaware is nonexistent. The school climate survey was administered only to schools with an expressed commitment to implementing PBS, and depended on individual school commitment to effective administration of the survey. Given the importance of understanding school climate in every school it might be valuable to consider adding school climate questions to the Delaware Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Abuse Survey, which is a highly effective method used to collect information from 5th, 8th, and 11th grade students on an annual basis. This process could serve as a model for the collection of school climate data in the future.

Beyond these observations and recommendations, specific findings warrant a deeper investigation as well. In particular, the conceptualization of “punitive” discipline techniques and its value may need to be reframed and the interaction of school community and student engagement in gambling activities is another significant and wholly neglected area of study in need of rigorous analysis.

As indicated in Table 4.9, more use of punitive discipline techniques within sample schools was associated with fewer students reporting the need to avoid parts of school in order to pre-empt trouble. Given past research findings, this warrants closer examination. Though contradictory to the philosophical underpinnings of PBS, use of punitive discipline in a manner that is perceived as fair by students and other stakeholders might be effective in enhancing a sense of safety, and is aligned with Arum’s (2003) previously mentioned argument. The temptation to enforce rigid behavioral interventions based upon these findings, however, would be shortsighted at best. Though it is possible that punitive disciplinary tactics are effective, it is equally possible that they might only mask problems, pushing them underground or beyond school boundaries. The high use of punitive disciplinary techniques might indeed eliminate problems within the school context; however, these problems might only be displaced to other parts of students’ lives.

The use of punitive discipline techniques was measured using the following 4 statements:

- Someone got into trouble for disobeying rules;
- Someone was sent out of class because of misbehavior;
- Someone was suspended out of school;
- Someone received in-school suspension.

Consequently, punitive techniques within confounds of the current research findings, should not necessarily be banned from practice; as punitive does not necessarily mean draconian. Practices related to the 4 questions listed above could be implemented fairly in higher rated sample schools – with fairness of implementation being more important than the actual style utilized. For example, if a student “got into trouble” or was punished for “disobeying rules,” but the punishment was warranted and consistent with what is expected, this outcome would not be considered harsh but more likely fair. Furthermore, the presence of a strong and consistent leadership may promote feelings of well-being among students and staff alike, thereby explaining these initially unexpected correlations with the use of punitive discipline techniques.

Intuitively, teachers and other school staff members would enjoy schools where students get along. This coincides with the finding that teachers and school staff report more favorable school climates in schools where a greater rate of students engage in gambling activities, which are also the schools where student relations are more favorable. This is clearly a complex, and likely a non-causal relationship, that warrants much greater attention.

The current study builds upon the foundation from which researchers must continue to expand. Large, national, and randomized samples are often seen as critical to scientific research, though it is not always a pragmatic approach to investigating social phenomena, particularly when there is a need for qualitative information to supplement quantitative data in hopes of enhancing our understanding. The nature of school climate

is highly complex. Information that would enhance one's understanding of this multifaceted phenomenon, includes a physical assessment of school grounds and building structures or physical space, information from school leadership, particularly the principal, to uncover information that cannot be examined via content analyses of school websites and mission statements or through quantitative measurement techniques; and although these indicators were examined, relationships between school climate and physical location (e.g. rural, suburban, and urban) as well as school grade structure, must be monitored. The possibility that school climate is varied by these indicators should not be overlooked despite the lack of statistical significance within the current research. Further, deeper exploration of all of the study's indicators is highly advisable. The importance of school climate is known, as are many indicators to improve milieu in schools. However, the policies and practices governing school climate are in their infancy. The need to close the gap between what is known and what is done in all schools around school climate is evident.

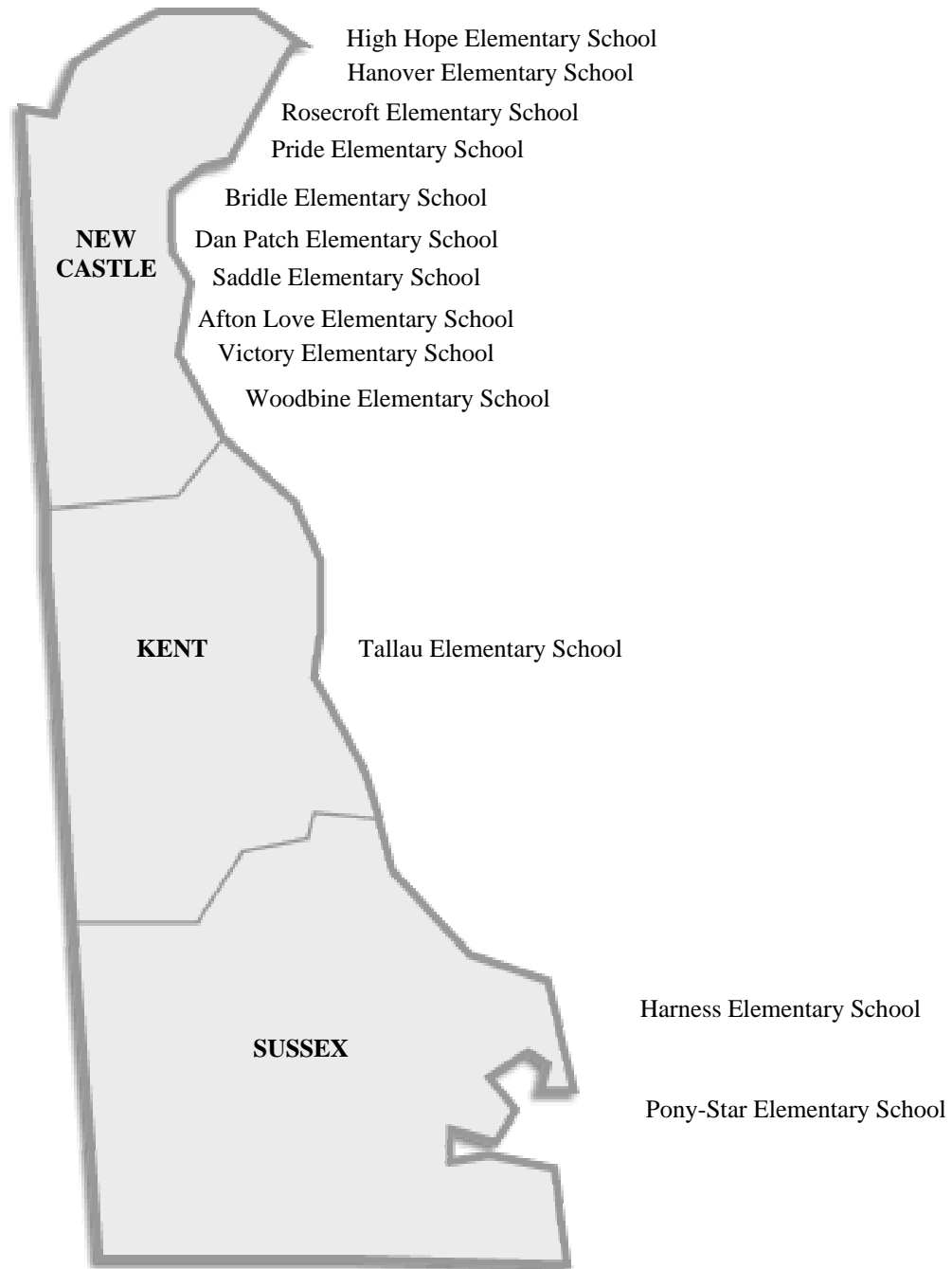
In sum, the current research provided some insights into its primary research questions. *(1) What differences, if any, exist between Delaware schools with a positive school climate and schools with a negative school climate? How might the observed differences be explained? (2) Is there a relationship between school climate and student outcomes in Delaware public elementary schools? If so, how might these relationships be explained?* However, these questions cannot yet be fully answered. The greatest contribution of the current study was to refine a research approach to understanding

relationships between school climate and student outcomes, as well as to highlight the need for better approaches to collecting school climate data.

APPENDIX A

Delaware Map: School Locations by County

School Locations by County



APPENDIX B

Study Indicators

Student Safety
School Crimes per 100 Students
DDOE Offenses per 100 Students
Bullying Incidents per 100 Students
Offensive Touching Incidents per 100 Students
Disorderly Conduct Incidents per 100 Students
Students Reporting that they Stay Away from Parts of the School to Avoid Trouble
Students Reporting that they Feel Safe in Their School
Students Reporting that Fighting is Problem in Their School
Student Risk Behavior
Students Reporting that they have Never Stolen at School
Students Reporting that they have Never Gambled
Students Reporting that they have Never Drunk Alcohol
Students Reporting that they have Never Smoked Cigarettes
Students Reporting that they have Never Smoked Marijuana
Students Reporting that they have Never Used Inhalants
Students Reporting that they have Never Used Other Substances
Students Reporting that they Like Trying New/Exciting Things Even if Against the Law
School Characteristics
County and Setting (e.g. urban or rural)
School Performance Rating in 2006
Student -Teacher Ratios in 2006
School Choice Students Enrolled during the 2006 School Year
Limited English Proficiency Students Enrolled during the 2006 School Year
Low Income Students Enrolled during the 2006 School Year
Special Education Students Enrolled during the 2006 School Year
Teaching Staff Experience (Percentage with 10 years or more versus Less than 10 years)
Teacher Education Levels (Percentage with versus without at Least a Masters Degree)
Total Student Enrollment
Suspensions per 100 Students
Teacher and Student Ethnic Composition
Parent and Community Involvement
Student Dress Code
School Mission Statement and Goals
Student Academic Performance
Average Rate of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Testing Standards [Includes Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies Content Areas]
School Climate
Students' Perceptions of the Use of Positive and Punitive Discipline Techniques
Teachers'/School Staffs', Homes', and Students' Overall Perceptions of School Climate
Students' Perceptions of Student Relations and Student/Teacher/Home Relations
Students' Perceptions of Fairness of School Rules
Students' Perceptions of Liking School and of School Safety

APPENDIX C

Delaware School Climate Surveys:
Students, Teachers/School Staff, and Home

**Delaware School Climate Survey
Student Version**

School Code:

What grade are you in?

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Please mark which you are:

Boy
Girl

Please mark your race:

Black Asian
White Other
Hispanic

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Use a No. 2 pencil or a blue or black ink pen only.
 - Do not use pens with ink that soaks through the paper.
 - Make solid marks that fill the response completely.
 - Make no stray marks on this form.
- CORRECT: ● INCORRECT: ✓ ✕ ◐ ⊙

Part 1

*Fill in the bubble that best shows how you feel about each statement below.
Please answer ALL items. If you are not sure, guess.*

	Disagree A LOT	Disagree	Agree	Agree A LOT
1. The school rules are fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Teachers treat students with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Consequences of breaking school rules are fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Stealing is a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Teachers are fair when correcting misbehavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. This school is safe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Teachers care about their students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Students get along with one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Drugs are a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I like my teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. I worry about others hurting me in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. I wish I went to another school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Students are friendly toward most other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Adults who work in this school care about the students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. The rules in this school are too harsh.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. I like this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Students really care about each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Students feel safe in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Fights are a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. The school's Code of Conduct is fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Teachers listen to you when you have a problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. I am proud of my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Students threaten and bully others in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Teachers let you know when you are doing a good job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Student cheating is a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Students treat each other with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. This school feels like a prison.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Adults in this school treat students fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. I feel safe in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 2

Fill in the bubble that says how often each item below happened in one of your classes during the PAST WEEK.

	Never	1-2 Times	3-5 Times	6 or more Times
1. Someone got into trouble for disobeying school rules.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Someone was sent out of class because of misbehavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Someone was suspended out of school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Someone received in-school suspension.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I got into trouble for disobeying school rules.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The class was rewarded for good behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. The teacher praised or rewarded a student for good behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I was praised or rewarded for good behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please check that you answered each question and that you filled in bubbles completely.

**Delaware School Climate Survey
Teacher and Staff Version**

School Code:

Current Position:

Classroom teacher

Administrator

Support staff (counselor, psychologist, intervention spec., nurse, etc.)

Other (specify) _____

Grade Level:

Elementary

Intermediate/Middle

High School

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Use a No. 2 pencil or a blue or black ink pen only.
 - Do not use pens with ink that soaks through the paper.
 - Make solid marks that fill the response completely.
 - Make no stray marks on this form.
- CORRECT: ● INCORRECT: ✓ x ☹ ☺

Part 1

*Fill in the bubble that best shows how you feel about each statement below.
Please answer ALL items. If you are not sure, guess.*

	Disagree A LOT	Disagree	Agree	Agree A LOT
1. The school rules are fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Students treat each other with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Teachers listen to the concerns of parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Stealing is a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Teachers care about their students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Drugs are a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Teachers and staff get along well together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. This school is safe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Teachers do a good job communicating with parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Fights are a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Teachers listen to students when they have a problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Teachers show respect toward parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. The rules in this school are too harsh.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Students really care about each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Teachers are fair when correcting misbehavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Students threaten and bully others in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Teachers treat students with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Cheating on tests and assignments is a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Students get along with one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Parents are informed not only about their child's misbehavior, but also about good behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Students should feel safe in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Consequences of breaking school rules are fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Teachers work closely with parents to help students when they have problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. I wish I taught at another school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Adults who work in this school care about the students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Students are friendly toward most other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. The school's Code of Conduct is fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Adults in this school treat students fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. I like this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 2

Fill in the bubble that says how often each item has happened during the PAST WEEK.

	Never	1-2 Times	3-5 Times	6 or more Times
1. I corrected a student for violating the Code of Conduct.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I sent a student out of class for misbehavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I recommended an out-of-school suspension.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. A student in my class received in-school suspension.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I rewarded my class for good behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I recognized or rewarded an individual student for good behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 3

Rate your overall satisfaction with school discipline and climate as it applies to your school.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
1. School safety.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. School discipline.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. How well your school is helping students develop self-discipline.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Teachers using effective classroom management to prevent behavior problems, such as motivating instruction, high expectations, clear rules, and positive teacher-student relations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The school's written Code of Conduct.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. How teachers and staff correct student misbehavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. How well your school is helping students become responsible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Communication with families on matters of school discipline.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. How the school is developing and maintaining a positive climate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. This school's behavioral support program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please check that you answered each question and that you filled in bubbles completely.

Delaware School Climate Survey Home Version

School Code:

Your child's grade:

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Your child's gender:

Male
Female

Your child's race:

Black Asian
White Other
Hispanic

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Use a No. 2 pencil or a blue or black ink pen only.
 - Do not use pens with ink that soaks through the paper.
 - Make solid marks that fill the response completely.
 - Make no stray marks on this form.
- CORRECT: ● INCORRECT: ✓ ✕ ☹ ☺

Part 1

*Fill in the bubble that best shows how you feel about each statement below.
Please answer ALL items. If you are not sure, guess.*

	Disagree A LOT	Disagree	Agree	Agree A LOT
1. The school rules are fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Students treat each other with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Teachers listen to the concerns of parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Stealing is a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Teachers care about their students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Drugs are a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Teachers and staff get along well together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. This school is safe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Teachers do a good job communicating with parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Fights are a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Teachers listen to students when they have a problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Teachers show respect toward parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. The rules in this school are too harsh.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Students really care about each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Teachers are fair when correcting misbehavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Students threaten and bully others in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Teachers treat students with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Cheating on tests and assignments is a problem in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Students get along with one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Parents are informed not only about their child's misbehavior, but also about good behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Students should feel safe in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Consequences of breaking school rules are fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Teachers work closely with parents to help students when they have problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. I wish I taught at another school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Adults who work in this school care about the students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Students are friendly toward most other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. The school's Code of Conduct is fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Adults in this school treat students fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. I like this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 2

Your Child's Behavior in School

Fill in the bubble that says how often each item below happened to you during THIS SCHOOL YEAR.

	Never	1-2 Times	3-5 Times	6 or more Times
1. I was informed by the school that my child violated the Code of Conduct.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I was informed about my child's good behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. My child was suspended out of school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I was informed that my child was sent out of class because of misbehavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I was informed that my child received in-school suspension.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. My child told me that he or she was rewarded or recognized by a teacher or other school employee for good behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 3

Rate your overall satisfaction with school discipline and climate as it applies to your child's school.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
1. School safety.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. School discipline.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. How well your school is helping students develop self-discipline.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Teachers using effective classroom management to prevent behavior problems, such as motivating instruction, high expectations, clear rules, and positive teacher-student relations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The school's written Code of Conduct.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. How teachers and staff correct student misbehavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. How well your school is helping students become responsible citizens.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Communication with families on matters of school discipline.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. How the school is developing and maintaining a positive climate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please check that you answered each question and that you filled in bubbles completely.

APPENDIX D

Sample Elementary School Content Analysis Form

Elementary School Content Analysis – Mission, Goals & www.GreatSchools.net

Mission	Goals	Environment	Mission	Goals	Student Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducive to Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Character
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Productive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empowerment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stimulating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring
Mission	Goals	Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Development	Mission	Goals	Communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Home Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technique	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Behavior Supports

www.greatschools.net	
Great Schools Rating	# out of 10
Overall Quality	n/a
Principal Leadership	n/a
Teacher Quality	n/a
Extracurricular Activities	n/a
Parent Involvement	n/a
Safety and Discipline	n/a
0 Parent Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None posted during 2006 school year
<i>(Posted during the 2006 Academic Year)</i>	

APPENDIX E

Data Request Letter and Permission Form

**University of Delaware, Doctoral Student
Use of Data Permission Request**

Who is conducting research?

Jane Case is a doctoral student at the University of Delaware in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy. Dr. Kathryn Denhardt, Associate Professor, is supervising her work. Ms. Case is studying the relationship between school climate and student behavior.

Ms. Case and/or Dr. Denhardt are available to answer **questions** or address any **concerns** regarding this data permission request.

Researcher

Jane N. Case, M.S.
janecase@hotmail.com
302-999-9063

Supervisor of Research

Kathryn Denhardt, PhD
kgden@udel.edu
302-831-3264

Why am I being contacted?

Your school is a part of the Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) project offered by the Delaware Department of Education in collaboration with the University of Delaware's Center for Disabilities Studies. You have completed the Delaware School Climate Survey during the spring 2006.

Dr. George Bear in the Department of Education at the University of Delaware developed a school climate survey*, which was used for data collection in these schools during the 2006 academic year. **The information has already been collected; no additional work is asked of you or the schools.**

How will the data be used?

These data will be used in addition to other previously collected school data related to student self-reported behavior (e.g. The Delaware School Survey or the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Survey). Once these data are analyzed, the information gleaned has the potential to inform key stakeholders in data driven decision-making around school safety policy.

In cases where school level discussions are necessary for discussion of statistical findings, pseudo-names will be used to avoid identification by third parties. Ms. Case will keep the data for 1 year following the completion of her doctoral degree. After the one-year period, all data will be destroyed. The data will be kept completely confidential and individual schools will not be identified.

* Three versions of the school climate survey instrument were developed and administered. One version of the survey was for students, another was for teachers and staff, and the third was for parents or guardians.

**University of Delaware, Doctoral Student
Use of Data Permission Form
Agreement**

By signing below you are indicating your agreement for the use of the previously collected school climate survey data to be used by Jane Case, University of Delaware doctoral student for the research purposes outlined above.

Please confirm your permission to use these data by signing below;

I confirm that I agree to allow for the use of previously collected school climate data as outlined above:

Signature: _____ Name: _____

District: _____ Date: _____

I Do Not Wish to Participate

By signing below you are indicating that Jane Case cannot use the previously collected school climate survey data for the purposes outlined above.

Please confirm your rejection of this data request by signing below. I thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Signature: _____ Name: _____

District: _____ Date: _____

Please forward this signed form to:

Dennis Rozumalski, Department of Education
Fax: 302-739-1770
E-Mail: drozumalski@doe.k12.de.us

APPENDIX F

Sample School Climate Survey Letter

A Sample of the Language used in a Letter
Provided to Schools by the Department of Education
Regarding Participation in the School Climate Survey

Dear parent/guardian

Enclosed is a survey about your child's school. We are asking parents and guardians to complete the survey so that we have a better understanding of your perception of our school. Your thoughts and ideas are very important. By completing this survey your thoughts will be included in our plans as we build on our strengths and work to make improvements.

The survey is being conducted in partnership with the Delaware Department of Education and the University of Delaware, Center for Disabilities Studies. There is no identifying information on the survey. Since information is confidential, all staff, student, and parent surveys will be sent to the Delaware Department of Education for analysis of our school data.

Please complete the enclosed survey using either pencil or a blue or black ballpoint pen. In order to keep the survey confidential, do not write your name on any of the pages. Write the name of your child's school in the upper right corner where it says school code. Please make sure every answer is clearly marked. Bubbles need to be completely filled in, in order to score your answer. If you are not sure about a question, make an educated guess how you perceive the problem or situation. Please place your completed survey in the enclosed envelope, seal it, and return it to school with your child by February 23rd.

Please feel free to contact me or your child's teacher if you have any questions about the survey.

Thank you for your willingness to share your thoughts with us and helping to make our school a better place for all students.

Sincerely,

Principal

APPENDIX G

Delaware Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Abuse Survey Questions

DELAWARE ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE SURVEY

Questions Used in the Present Study
2006: 5th Grade Survey with Original Survey Question Numbers

Original Question	Response	#
I feel safe in my school.	Yes/No	18
I stay away from certain parts of the school to avoid trouble.	Yes/No	19
Fighting is a problem in this school.	Yes/No	32
Have you ever taken (not borrowed) something that didn't belong to you at school?	Yes/No	50
Have you ever smoked most of a cigarette (more than a few puffs)?	Yes/No	61
Have you ever had a drink of alcohol (wine, beer, liquor) more than just a sip?	Yes/No	67
Have you ever smoked marijuana, (pot, weed)?	Yes/No	69
How often have you gambled (bet) for money or possessions?	Never/Other	71
I like to try new or exciting things, even if they are against the law.	Yes/No	74
How often do you use inhalants (huffing, glue, sprays, gasoline)?	Never/Other	83
ORIGINAL QUESTIONS COMPILED FOR SUBSTANCE ABSTENTION COMPOSITE MEASURE		
How often have you used cigars?	Never/Other	78
How often have you used Bidis/Kreteks or clove cigarettes?	Never/Other	79
How often have you used chewing tobacco, snuff, dip (Skoal, Red Man)?	Never/Other	80
How often do you use uppers, prescription and street drugs (speed, meth, crank, diet pills) to get high?	Never/Other	84
How often do you use downers, prescription and street drugs (tranqs, barbs, Xanax) to get high?	Never/Other	85
How often do you use hallucinogens (acid, LSD, trip, shrooms)?	Never/Other	88
How often do you use powdered cocaine (snow, blow)?	Never/Other	89

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